t H. D. GARDEIL, O. P-

Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas

IV. METAPHYSICS

Translated hy John A. Otto, ph.d.

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✠ Joseph Cardinal Ritter

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Foreword

AS part of the series we have entitled *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* this volume, like the others, claims but modest scope and purpose; for, it bears repeating, the series as a whole is meant to be just what the title says, an introduction, a helping hand to those who are beginning the study of St. Thomas and desire to read him in his own words. Accordingly, though the important problems have all, in varying degree, been examined, the present volume does not pretend to be a complete elaboration of Thomistic metaphysics. Even in a modest work of this nature some choice, however, has to be made in organizing the material and interpreting the doctrine. What has in this regard seemed best to us will appear as the work progresses; it need not, then, be gone into here.

To this final volume of the series—final, at least, as of now—is appended a glossary of St. Thomas' technical

vocabulary, held of necessity to terms most frequently met, which are defined according to their most usual sense. While some of the terms, as terms, have their popular usage, in St. Thomas, it should be noted, as for that matter in Scholastic literature generally, they have a meaning of their own, formal and precise, without the grasp of which no real understanding of Thomistic thought is possible. The glossary, such as it is, covers all four volumes of the series: Logic, Cosmology, Psychology, and Metaphysics.

To the presentation of this volume many have in one way or another made valuable contribution. It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge our indebtedness to them, particularly to the confreres Father Guérard des Lauriers and Father Hubert.

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The English translation of quotations and selections from St. Thomas is taken from various sources. Acknowledgment is due the following publishers for permission to quote, one or more passages (as the case may be), from the works indicated:

1 *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas:* II, *Cosmology;* trans, by John A. Otto (St. Louis & London: B. Herder Book Co., 1958).

2 *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas:* III, *Psychology;* trans, by John A. Otto (St. Louis & London: B. Herder Book Co., 1956).

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For English quotations from Aristotle, I found Ross' *The Student's Oxford Aristotle* (Oxford University Press, 1942) a useful reference, but final responsibility for each instance rests with myself. Lastly, paragraph numbers for the Commentary on the *Metaphysics* are according to the Cathala-Spiazzi edition (Rome & Turin: Marietti, 1950).

J. A. O.

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Introduction to the Philosophy

of St. Thomas Aquinas

IV. METAPHYSICS

t CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I. GENERAL NOTION OF METAPHYSICS

t IN philosophic idiom the word *metaphysics* denotes the higher branch of philosophy, the part that seeks after the most basic principles of things, their ultimate ground and nature. The word itself was first suggested by Andronicus of Rhodes (2nd century B.C.), the first redactor of Aristotle's complete works. Under the heading of *Meta ta Phusïka* (lit. "after the Physcals") Andronicus placed a group of fourteen books (long "chapters," in modern description) whose content seemed to follow logically after the books of the *Physics.* Yet Aristotle himself had never spoken of these fourteen books or of their content as "metaphysics" but always as "first philosophy" or as "theology."

The proper object of metaphysics, or its special reference of inquiry, in Aristotelian thought is, we shall see, being as being together with its properties. But the proper object, or at least this determination of it, is not clear-cut from the outset; indeed, a first survey of the *Metaphysics* reveals what amounts to three successive conceptions of the science,

yet on the face of it there is no firm indication how they are to be integrated. St. Thomas, who accepts the Aristotelian view of the proper object, was aware that the threefold conception lay, or so it seemed, unresolved and went to some pains to clarify it; which he does in the Prologue to his Commentary. Among the points made are these:

First, in contrast to other sciences, which explore only the more immediate principles and causes, metaphysics stands forth as the *science of first causes and first principles.* This definition echoes the general notion of science, for in the Aristotelian tradition it is axiomatic that science, all true science, consists in knowledge through causes: *cognitio per causas.* It is from this point of view that metaphysics is properly called "first philosophy," the conception that predominates in Book A of Aristotle's treatise.

Secondly, metaphysics can also be envisioned as the *science of being as being and of the attributes (or properties') of being as being,* a view of the science which points to the comprehensiveness of its object. Unlike other sciences, each of which considers only a particular province of being, metaphysics, the science of being as being, embraces all being. This conception is developed in Book **Γ** and appears to be upheld in the sequel. It is the conception which corresponds to the word "metaphysics" in its proper sense.

Thirdly, metaphysics can be defined as the *science of the immobile* (i.e. the motionless or unchanging) *and the separate* (i.e. from matter). In this it differs from the philosophy of nature or physics in the Aristotelian sense and from mathematics; for the proper object of these sciences always retains some mode of materiality. Moreover, among beings that are separate (i.e. free) from matter must be reckoned God, who is indeed furthest removed. Consequently, metaphysics understood as the science

of the separate includes the study of God and is not improperly spoken of as "theology," the conception that preponderates in Book E and thereafter.

St. Thomas' Prologue is, however, too important to be dismissed with passing summary; it should be read clear through with close attention. Note especially his analysis of the primacy that metaphysics enjoys among the sciences. Metaphysics, he observes, governs and directs all other sciences, and this in virtue of the principle that the most intellectual science is the ruling science. But then, why should metaphysics be the most intellectual science? The answer is because its object are the "most intelligibles," beings and modes of being of the highest intelligibility. This notion "most intelligible" admits, however, of a threefold sense; and thereby hangs the threefold conception. For the explanation, here is St. Thomas himself:

> First, ["most intelligible" can be understood] from the viewpoint of the order of knowing; for those things from which the intellect derives certitude seem to be more intelligible. Therefore, since the certitude of science is acquired by the intellect knowing causes, a knowledge of causes seems to be intellectual in the highest degree. Hence that science which considers first causes also seems to be the ruler of the others in the highest degree.
>
> Second, this phrase can be understood by comparing the intellect with the senses; for while sensory perception is a knowledge of particulars, the intellect seems to differ from sense by reason of the fact that it comprehends universals. Hence that science is pre-eminently intellectual which deals with the most universal principles. These principles are *being* and those things which naturally accompany being, such as *unity* and *plurality*,

potency and *act.* Now such principles should not remain entirely undetermined, since without them a complete knowledge of the principles which are proper to any genus or species cannot be had. Nor again should they be dealt with in any one particular science, for, since a knowledge of each class of beings stands in need of these principles, they would with equal reason be investigated in every particular science. It follows, then, that such principles be treated by one common science, which, since it is intellectual in the highest degree, will govern the others.

Third, this phrase can be understood from the viewpoint of the intellect's own knowledge. For since each thing has intellective power by virtue of being free from matter, those things must be intelligible in the highest degree which are altogether separate from matter. . . . Now those things are separate from matter in the highest degree which abstract not only from signate matter . . . but from sensible matter altogether; and these are separate from matter not only in their intelligible constitution *[ratio],* as the objects of mathematics, but also in being, as God and the intelligences [spirits]. Therefore the science which considers such things seems to be the most intellectual and the ruler and master of the others.1

These, then, are the various aspects to metaphysics: science of first principles and first causes (which is to say, wisdom), science of being as being, and science of what is utterly separate from matter. Our next step will be to examine these formulations in some detail, and thus provide a better understanding of the underlying notion in each case. To this end we shall, among other things, trace their development in Greek thought and observe how they align

1 *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle,* Prologue. English citations from this Commentary will be, throughout the present volume, in the translation of John P. Rowan, published in two volumes by Henry Regnery Company: Chicago, 1961. (Copyright Henry Regnery Company, 1961)

themselves with the course of that thought as a whole. So doing, we shall be reminded that Aristotle is not without ancestry, that though his metaphysical accomplishment is a triumph of discovery and elaboration in its own right, it may also be seen as the culminating synthesis of a metaphysical enterprise stretching back three centuries before him.

II. METAPHYSICS AS WISDOM

1. *General Notion of Wisdom*

In the first book of the *Metaphysics* 2 Aristotle recounts the most commonly accepted notions regarding the qualities of philosophical wisdom. Thus, wisdom is thought to be the most universal (i.e. the most inclusive) science, and the most difficult, and the most deserving of being taught. Aristotle does not cast these notions aside, but to him the truest characteristic of wisdom is this: it is science of first causes and first principles. Pursuing this thought, he observes that man has an inborn curiosity about things, a natural desire to know their causes, and this desire is not satisfied until the ultimate cause is reached, beyond which no other is to be found and which must therefore be self-sufficing. Whatever science delivers the ultimate explanations, which is to say the ultimate or first causes, that science is wisdom. And since metaphysics does this, it is rightfully called wisdom.

2. *The Several Kinds of Wisdom*

a) The notion of wisdom is as little the exclusive property of Aristotelianism as it is of Christianity. Every philosophical system worthy of the name purports to be wisdom. Yet

2 *Metaph.* A, 2.

there are wide differences within philosophical wisdom itself, depending on the goal pursued and the means and method employed.[3]

In earliest Greek usage the word "wisdom" (sophia) had a decidedly utilitarian connotation, being synonymous with skill or excellence in any craft. So, Polycleitus was wise because of his exceptional competence as sculptor. But "sophia" also meant a certain mastery in the conduct of one's life. In this superior sense Socrates speaks of it. Wise, he said, is he who knowing himself well, knows how to govern himself truly. Plato, making the moral heritage of Socrates his own, carried it a step further, acclaiming wisdom the art of governing, by the norms of justice and prudence, not merely oneself but the whole city or state.

Philosopher of the Ideas, Plato went on to discover new paths to wisdom for the human soul. By its intellectual element called *Nous,* this soul was said to be in communication with the true realities, those same intelligible forms or Ideas pinnacled by the Good, highest of them all. Wisdom, by this stroke, assimilates to *theoria* or contemplation—contemplation of the Ideas and, in the final phase, of God. Aristotle and Plotinus, the most eminent disciples of Plato, followed their master in seizing upon and espousing this intellectual ascent toward the highest being. All told, then, among its most dedicated followers and within

3 Indeed, as the author suggests, not only does one philosophical system differ from another, but within the same system one branch may differ greatly from another in intention, in manner of demonstration, in degree of certitude attainable, etc. It is on these and similar counts that speculative philosophy, to take a broad example, differs from practical philosophy and that each of these divisions admits of differences within itself.—Translator's note.

the limits placed on sole human access, philosophic wisdom did espy its true source and principle. But one essential continued to elude it; for though this wisdom had discerned, however dimly, the path to God, it was and remained ignorant of the means to secure him effectively.

In the Judeo-Christian revelation, contemplation of God is likewise the ultimate goal of wisdom, but there is a complete turnabout of perspective. No longer is wisdom to be attained from below as by mere human effort. It issues from above, from heaven. In short, it is salvation, bestowed by God at his pleasure and through his grace. Wisdom in this light is from its very inception something that exceeds philosophy, though even under the sovereignty of grace it is perfectly possible for an authentic philosophic wisdom to be constituted.

Squarely opposed, however, to the wisdom that is God's dispensation is that attitude which the gospel labels the wisdom "of this world," warning us against it. Basically, this consists in the refusal of the transcendent, of anything that is not authored by man himself. It betrays itself in the studied determination to administer all the affairs of the world along secularistic lines, with no thought to supramundane man and his wants. To the Christian this is, of course, no more than the pretense of wisdom, false and deceitful, like the ideals its professes.

b) In the foregoing paragraphs we spoke of wisdom from an historical aspect. Considering it doctrinally, or as to content, we find that St. Thomas together with Catholic theologians in general, acknowledges three possible forms of wisdom for the human soul, wisdoms which, though essentially different, are not opposed to each other but

related in hierarchical fashion. They are: infused wisdom (gift of the Holy Ghost), theology, and metaphysics, which differ each from the other on two counts; for each has its special light of understanding and each its own formal object.

By infused wisdom the soul judges in the light of connatural knowledge, connatural by grace with God's knowledge; its foundation is the love that is charity (in the gospel sense), and its object is God as he is in himself but attained through a suprahuman mode of acting, or rather of being acted on. Theological wisdom is, like the preceding, under the rule of supernatural faith, and its object is also God as he is in himself; but its immediate foundation is revelation and not charity, and its mode of activity is essentially the human mode of reason. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is a purely human wisdom; its only light is natural reason, and though it also seeks to know God the supreme principle of things, it knows him only as inferred cause (hence indirectly), and not as he is in himself (as an object directly apprehended).

Christian thought knows of yet another meaning for wisdom when it uses the term to designate that essential attribute of God which is his substantial Wisdom and which the theology of the Blessed Trinity refers to the Person of the Son. This Wisdom, it should be noted, is the common origin of the three wisdoms spoken of above, which enlighten the human soul in ascending manner and measure; it is also, and for that very reason, the principle by which, in the last analysis, each finds itself in perfect accord with the other. Far from being opposed, therefore, the three wisdoms accessible to the Christian complement each

other in perfect harmony, and for a man to be most truly wise is to grow unceasingly in all three of them; for each is a participation, one more perfect than the other, in that highest wisdom which is God's own measure and manifestation of the universe.

3. *Wisdom, Science, and Understanding*

Having spoken, though but broadly, of wisdom as to its object or content, we have now to consider it from the standpoint of the subject, the person possessing it. Also brought up for review, by way of comparison, will be the allied notions of science and understanding.

Taken in its subject, wisdom according to St. 'Thomas is a *habitus* or virtue of the intellect. Since any virtue is a perfection, this one is a perfection of intellect. And in what does this perfection consist? In making it possible for the intellect to perform its activity, or at least some part of its activity, with ease and exactitude.

Here a few words on the basic classification of virtues will be in order. According to Aristotelian doctrine human virtues are of two general kinds: moral virtues, which reside in and perfect the appetitive powers; and intellectual virtues, which reside in and perfect the intellect. Our present concern is with the intellectual virtues. Of these according to Aristotle,4 and St. Thomas agrees,5 there are five distinct species. Three of them—science, understanding, and wisdom—pertain to the speculative intellect; the other two-prudence and art—to the practical intellect. If, then, along with wisdom there are two other virtues *(habitus')* of the

4Cf. *Ethica Nic.* Book VI.

5 Cf. *Summa theol.* la Ilae, q. 57, aa. 2–4.

speculative intellect, namely science and understanding, in what do they differ?

The answer lies in the following considerations. The proper perfection of the speculative intellect is the true, which may, however, he attained in two ways: either as known in itself, immediately *(per se notum),* or as known in another, mediately *(per aliud notum).*

Keeping this distinction in mind, we go a step further. What is known in itself is by way of a principle (as against a conclusion) and, to repeat, is grasped immediately by the intellect. To this end the intellect is perfected by the virtue called *intellectus* or understanding.6 On the other hand, what is known in another is in the nature of a terminus (as against a principle or starting-point). Here again we find two possibilities. Either the truth that is known stands as term or conclusion of a particular branch of knowledge, in which case the intellect is perfected by the virtue called *science;* or the truth in question represents the ultimate term of all human knowledge, in which case the intellect is perfected by the virtue called *wisdom.*

Wisdom, accordingly, is a *habitus* (virtue or quality) which perfects the speculative intellect. But this does not yet distinguish it from the other speculative intellectual virtues, science and understanding. What is unique to wisdom is that it perfects the intellect in its quest of knowledge that is absolutely universal, the quest to proceed from principles and reasons which in their own order are ultimate or highest—"in their own order," because theological wisdom, for example, uses different principles and reasons from

6 This use of "understanding" should not be confused with the more popular sense of "discernment" or "comprehension."—[Tr.]

metaphysical wisdom. One important conclusion to be drawn from all this is the following. If science, as an intellectual virtue, pertains to a particular branch of knowledge and there are many such branches, or at least more than one, obviously there can be more than one intellectual virtue of science; but of wisdom, which judges of things universally, there can be but one virtue under the same formal light, be this reason, revelation, or divine infusion. Further questions, however, suggest themselves, to which we shall next give attention.

a) *Is it correct to draw an irreducible distinction, as we have done, between wisdom on the one hand and science and understanding, on the other?* There are really two, if not three, questions involved here. For one, wisdom is said to explain things through their causes; but so does science, which in general is defined as knowledge through causes. Is wisdom, then, a science? The answer is yes, if we take science in the more general sense of knowledge through causes; no, if we apply the term strictly, which limits science to one of the intellectual virtues explained above.[7]

Secondly, for the knowledge of first principles St. Thomas, as we have seen, posits a separate virtue called *intellectus,* generally rendered "understanding." Is such a separate virtue necessary or justified, considering that the principles in question must also be known by science and wisdom, since all their reasoning is based on them. Nevertheless, the distinction between understanding on one side and science and wisdom on the other is not thereby erased; for they do not know the principles in exactly the same

7 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia IIae, q. 57, a. 2, ad 1.

way. The virtue of understanding is reserved for the pure apprehension of the principles, no account taken of their application; whereas by science and wisdom the principles are apprehended in their relation to the truths which flow from and depend on them.[8]

But this answer casts up another doubt. If, in other words, the virtue of wisdom holds its basic principles from understanding, which grasps them in themselves, it would seem that wisdom is not, after all, the highest of the intellectual virtues. St. Thomas, in reply, notes that wisdom is in a privileged position as regards first principles; it not only knows and uses them, as does every science, but to it falls the higher function of evaluating and defending them against their critics. As knowledge of conclusions (rather than principles) wisdom resembles the intellectual virtue of science, yet is higher than science because its conclusions are of a higher order; whereas in declaring and defending, and not simply knowing, the first principles wisdom excels the mere habit of the principles, or understanding. Wisdom, in fine, is the highest intellectual virtue.[9]

b) *Is wisdom purely speculative, or is it also practical?* Generally speaking, the present tendency is to attribute both qualities to wisdom, namely, to regard it as at once speculative (knowledge for its own sake) and practical (knowledge regulating conduct). St. Thomas, for whom the matter is not quite so simple, answers as follows.

Wisdom that is directly under the rule of faith is both speculative and practical; it establishes both the order of knowledge and the order of human activity. Such is the

[8] Cf. *ibid,* ad 2.

[9] Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia IIae, q. 66, a. 5, ad 4.

wisdom that is the gift of the Holy Ghost.10 Such, too, is supernatural theology, for though primarily speculative, it is also a practical science.11 Metaphysics, on the other hand, is by Aristotelian tradition placed among the purely speculative virtues. Indeed, Aristotle himself seldom if ever passes an opportunity to underscore its utterly disinterested character, always grouping it with physics and mathematics to form the triad of theoretical (i.e. speculative) sciences, which differ by their end from the practical sciences.12 Supreme theoretical wisdom of the natural order, metaphysics in short is a purely speculative, meaning contemplative, science—not, you remember, the virtue "science," but in the more general sense of knowledge through causes.

c) *The proper acts of wisdom.* St. Thomas regularly refers two types of intellectual acts to wisdom, viz. to judge and to order. As he remarks on numerous occasions,

ad sapientem pertinet judicare et ordinare,

"to the wise man does it belong to judge and to order." How are we to understand this judging and this ordering? The "judgment" in question, to speak of this first, is not just any kind but one that is enunciated by the intellect on the highest evidence, ultimately on the evidence of the supreme principles; it is a judgment of apical validity, a definitive determination of right order so final and authoritative that there is no going beyond it.

Similarly, while to order is in general to bring things in line with an end of one kind or another, in respect of

10 Cf. *Summa theol.* IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 3.
11 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 1, a. 4.
12 Cf. *Metaph.* E, 1.

wisdom this end can only mean the highest one of all. Consequently, for a wise man to order consists in referring all things back to God. In its full application, moreover, to order is not only to discover or to contemplate an existing order but also to create an order by will and other powers of action. Nevertheless, the mere intellectual consideration of an existing order may also, in a modified sense, be regarded as an "ordering," since this consideration, too, involves the act of putting things in order, albeit the order is made in and for the intellect alone. It is in this limited sense that we should understand the ordering activity of metaphysics, which, as we have seen, is a purely speculative science. But practical or speculative, true wisdom will reflect that ultimate judgment and ordering that is God's.

4. *The Excellence of Wisdom*

For St. Thomas the excellence of a virtue is measured principally by the perfection of its object, of what comes within its proper purview. By this standard wisdom is clearly the most excellent of virtues, since it inquires of the highest of causes, which is God, and judges of all things in the light of this cause. In addition, because of its superior point of view—superior in virtue of its superior object—wisdom presides over the other intellectual virtues; these, accordingly, are subordinate to wisdom, falling as they do under its judgment and its power to order all things.[13] St. Thomas, it may be mentioned, notes some doubt as to this subordination. Man, runs the objection, can have more perfect knowledge of things human than of things divine, wisdom being concerned with the latter. But

13 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia IIae, q. 66, a. 5.

the objection does not hold, at least for St. Thomas, who replies that it is worthier to acquire what little knowledge is possible of higher things than a whole lot of knowledge of lesser realities.[14]

Aristotle is of similar mind. Though in some respects he left the matter hovering, he was not unaware that first philosophy (metaphysics, hence wisdom) owes its excellence to the pre-eminence of its principles. He calls it, in fact, a divine science, having a divine object; but instead of its prerogative to judge and to order, he is more inclined to extol its privilege of being free and autonomous, existing, that is, for its own sake. "For just as we call that man free," he remarks, "who exists for his own sake and not for the sake of another, so this science, too, is the only one of all the sciences that is free, since it alone exists for its own sake. Hence also there is some ground for regarding its possession beyond human power."[15] In the highest sense of the word the wise man is thus a free man, with all the superiority this freedom confers.

But if wisdom makes a man free, it promises still more. What these further rewards are may be seen from this passage of St. Thomas, in which he praises the quest of wisdom:

> Of all human pursuits, that of wisdom is the most perfect, the most sublime, the most profitable, the most delightful. It is the most perfect, since in proportion as a man devotes himself to the pursuit of wisdom, so much does he already share in true happiness, ... It is the most sublime because thereby especially does man approach to a likeness to God, *who made all things in*

[14] Cf. *ibid,* ad 3.
[15] *Metaph.* A, 2, 982 b 25-30.

wisdom (Ps. 103:24), ... It is the most profitable, because by wisdom itself man is brought to the kingdom of immortality, ... It is the most delightful because *her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness* (Wis. 8:16).[16]

Doubtless, this encomium of the Angelic Doctor's, in which breathes his own enraptured soul, is not borne out in full except by wisdom founded on divine revelation; but measure for measure it finds fulfillment in metaphysical wisdom, too, the highest knowledge this side of revelation.[17]

III. METAPHYSICS AS THE SCIENCE OF WHAT IS SEPARATE FROM MATTER

1. Origins of the Doctrine of Separation

Metaphysics, we have said, may also be understood as the science of what is utterly separate, or devoid of matter. Like many another doctrine in Greek thought, this one of separation, or distinguishing mind and matter, evolved gradually through a long line of philosophical thinkers. Its classical formulation in Aristotle represents, therefore, the efflorescence of an idea whose roots ran at least as far back as Anaxagoras, the first, or so it is commonly accepted, to put forth a separation, that is, distinction of mind from matter. It should be noted, however, that the *Nous* he proposes for meditation is not yet clearly differentiated

[16] *Contra Gentiles,* I, 2.

[17] Cf. Text I, "The Prerogatives of Metaphysics," p. 238. On the general theme of wisdom, in particular its developments in modem philosophy, the reader could profitably consult Dr. James D. Collins' 1962 Marquette University Aquinas Lecture, namely *The Lure of Wisdom* (Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1962); also, in the same series, Professor Gilson's 1951 Lecture, *Wisdom and Love in St. Thomas Aquinas.*— [Tr.]

from corporeal objects, nor is its influence on these objects sharply defined. Still, a first step was taken by him toward the separation from matter of an element of being that lay beyond matter.

With Plato the separation is decisive. The world of Ideas he postulated is a world of realities without so much as the shadow of matter attaching to them. For him, the Ideas were the necessary answer to the problem of intellectual knowledge. They alone, as he saw it, provided the intellect with the kind of object that could guarantee its knowledge, for they varied not at all but were permanent, and permanently self-identical. So that only knowledge pertaining to the Ideas deserved the name of science; all else was opinion, shifting and ephemeral. Plato, it may be said in passing, was quite correct as to the kind of object the intellect must have, but whether this object must exist in separation from matter, that is something else again.

Aristotle, for one, did not think so. Though agreeing that scientific knowledge calls for a principle of stability and necessity, identified by Plato with the Idea, Aristotle did not seek this principle in a separate entity but, truer to experience, found it in material reality itself, namely in substantial form. Corporeal things, then, are not just matter; they are matter and form. For all that, however, Aristotle did not repudiate the doctrine of separate substances—substances, that is, without any matter whatever.

Moreover, in his theory of knowledge Aristotle is at one with Plato on the insistence that to be intelligible the object must be abstracted (taken away, somehow) from matter. For him as for Plato, the intellect is a spiritual faculty; directly (as against indirectly) it can only know the "quiddity" of corporeal things; which is to say, the essence

abstracted from matter. Consistent, also, with the spirit of Plato, and indeed implied in the principle of abstraction, is this other thought of Aristotle's, that an object is intelligible in proportion to its liberation from matter; the more immaterial it is, the more it is intelligible in itself—in itself, because not necessarily to every intellect. All of which St. Thomas will capsule in the assertion that the foundation, the essential condition, of intellection is immateriality.[18] As intimated, however, not all immateriality, which is to say not all abstraction from matter, is of the same degree. This brings us to the next heading, where, in particular, the immateriality proper to metaphysics should be noted.

2. *The Three Degrees of Abstraction*

Within the complex of speculative science Aristotle distinguishes three types or degrees of immateriality in the objects of knowledge and, correlatively, in the intellectual operations proportioned to the objects. These degrees correspond to the threefold classification of speculative science into physical, mathematical, and metaphysical, a classification traditionally accepted. Now, how does one degree differ from another? It differs according to the objective matter or material conditions left behind by the intellect in the abstractive process, or inversely, according to the matter and material conditions retained in the definitions

[18] St. Thomas, of course, as well as Aristotle knew that immateriality is the condition of *all* knowledge, sense knowledge included. For some helpful remarks on the meaning of "immateriality" in this context the reader may consult the author's *Psychology* (Vol. III of the present series), pp. 99-101; trans, by John A. Otto (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1956).—[Tr.]

which govern demonstration in a given science. The detailed analysis of this doctrine rests, however, with psychology or, perhaps more properly, with logic—major logic, that is, not infrequently identified with epistemology. We shall therefore content ourselves with a summarization.

On the level of physical science the intellect abstracts from matter so far as it is the principle of individuation, hence from individual or signate matter *(materia signata);* but matter is retained so far as it is the basis of sensible qualities. It is therefore called sensible or common matter *(materia sensibilis vel communis).* Since qualities, which are retained, are changeable or mobile, by that very fact is retained the changeability or mobility of things. In the second or mathematical degree, abstraction is made of the aforesaid common sensible matter, but kept under consideration is material substance as quantified, which in the Aristotelian tradition goes by the name "intelligible matter" *(materia intelligibilis),*[19]

In metaphysics, on the other hand, the abstraction is

[19] Not that this "matter" is "immaterial," as the unwary might erroneously take it from the appellative "intelligible." However, the exegesis of the phrase "intelligible matter" would require an historical excursus that cannot be undertaken here. Suffice it to say that in the context "intelligible" refers not so much to the intellect as to the imagination, so that we would not impair, and perhaps improve the sense of it if we said "imaginable matter," *materia imaginabilis,* i.e. matter as terminating in and known by the imagination, an inner sense, in contrast to matter as terminating in and known by the outer sense.

Further elucidations of this notion of "intelligible matter" may be found in Charles De Koninck's eminently perceptive article "Abstraction from Matter (II)," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique,* XVI (1, i960), pp. 63–69.—[Tr.]

complete; abstracted, therefore, is all matter and motion of whatever kind. This degree of abstraction takes us into the realm of the utterly immaterial, which comprises both spiritual realities (God and the angels) and the primary concepts of being—being itself and the transcendentals, to mention the more obvious. The latter, that is, the primary concepts and the realities corresponding to them are independent or separate from matter in the sense that they need not be realized in corporeal things but are found as well in incorporeal or spiritual being.[20]

The special character of metaphysical abstraction will be pointed out at some length in the next chapter, when we analyze the notion of being. It is well, though, to anticipate a word of caution on the general subject of abstraction, and on metaphysical abstraction in particular. The intellect, we have said, attains in successive steps the three degrees of immateriality; but the activity by which it does this is not of a piece, or uniformly the same, as though the three steps were mere repetitions of the identical operation. The three acts of abstraction are not homogeneous, though comparable—analogous is really the word. To overlook this is to lapse into superficiality, not to say into gross misconception. True, the degrees of abstraction have in common that each is a removal of matter from consideration, but the manner of removal as well as the extent differs from one degree to the next. In the case of metaphysics St. Thomas prefers not even to call it abstraction

20 For St. Thomas' analysis of the degrees of abstraction see *In* VI *Metaph.* lect. i, nos. 1156-1163; In *Boet. de Trinitate,* q. 5, aa. 1, 3; *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 85, a. 1, ad 2.

but, more accurately, "separation," a term he does not apply to the first and second degree.[21]

The word "separation" must not, however, lead us astray in another direction. When, in other words, metaphysics is said to be the science of the "separate" or, if one prefers, of the "abstract," this does not imply that its object is divorced from real existence but only from the material conditions of existence. It could not be otherwise. Indeed, we shall see that the object of metaphysics is eminently real and concrete; so that far from being out of touch with reality, the metaphysician is in the full sense of the word more a realist than any of his fellows in the fraternity of scholars and scientists. And this is true whether he considers, under the aspect of being, the totality of things material and immaterial or whether, sectoring his horizon, he fixes attention on what is real above all because immaterial above all: pure spirits, that is, and infinitely above them, God.

IV. METAPHYSICS AS THE SCIENCE OF BEING AS BEING

In this, the third aspect which Aristotle's metaphysics assumes, the accent is on the universality of the science.

21 Cf. *In Boet, de Trinitate,* q. 5, a. 3. Also well worth reading in this connection is Maritain, *Existence and the Existent* (Doubleday Image paperback), pp. 37-42, with particular attention to note 14, on the abstraction proper to metaphysics together with references to other works of his dealing with the degrees of abstraction. *Existence and the Existent* is translated by Lewis Galantiere and Gerald B. Phelan (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., [Tr.]

There are in philosophy certain notions that run through all its branches, the most common or universal notions, as they are called. For each branch to make a study of these notions would lead to fruitless as well as endless repetition. Yet they are too important to go unexamined; somewhere they must be submitted to careful analysis and interpretation. Logically as well as by general agreement this task falls to metaphysics, the science universal.

i. *Historical Derivation of the Metaphysics of Being*

Among the universal notions just referred to is that of being. In Aristotelian thought, however, this notion is not simply one of many; it is first and most fundamental, the one the intellect conceives before all others. What, it may be asked, moved Aristotle to accord the primacy to the notion of being? The question is not idle; it has to do with what is perhaps the most significant adoption in all his philosophy. And as with other positions adopted by Aristotle, this one too had had a considerable history in Greek thought; so that once again it is in the speculations of his predecessors that Aristotle finds the direction his own thought will take.

As far as can be determined, it was Parmenides who first realized the preeminent value of the notion of being. For a century or two before him Greek philosophical schools had concentrated on determining the primordial element, the ultimate substance of which the physical world could have been constituted. The answers were many and varied. Thales held for water, Anaximenes for air, Heraclitus for fire. Others, going beyond the appearances of things, made some progress toward a first element or principle that was

not sense-perceptible, Anaximander, for example, thinking he had found it in what he called the "indeterminate" *(apeirori),* and Pythagoras in number.

Parmenides, next on the scene, was not detained by these surmisings. In his poem on nature, as a man sure of his ground, he goes straight to the mark, unerringly showing the way to being, which he deems the way to truth. Being, he says, *is (esti)*— or, perhaps more aptly, exists; moreover, being is all one, and undivided, and immobile (unchanging) yet corporeal, resembling a vast sphere. But, he continues, if being is, then nonbeing is the absolute opposite, an absolute nothing; in a word, it *is not*—where "not" means the utter negation of being.[22] We may note that the Parmenidean doctrine of being, if pushed to the limit, would mean the suppression of real becoming and real multiplicity in the world; nevertheless, the first foundations of the metaphysics of being are here in the making.

Plato, while not ignoring the Parmenidean doctrine and the problems it raises, gave the quest of the first principle a different turn. In his view the ultimate explanation of a thing lay rather in its end, meaning its perfection or good. Thus the master Idea, the one that excels all others, is that of the Good, in which the science of dialectics,[23] for him

22 To the uninitiated the assertion that "nonbeing can only mean utter nothing" is doubtless good sense, when in fact the consequences, alluded to in the text, are rather disastrous. This will be more fully examined in chapter 6, on act and potency.—[Tr.]

23 "Dialectic" is a chameleon word changing, practically, with every philosopher (or philosophy). As conceived by Plato, dialectic is essentially the science of highest principles (bearing on the subsistent Ideas, the only realities worthy of the name); which is far different from what it means (say) on the lips of Kant or the Marxists or, for that matter, of Aristotle.—Translator's note.

the science par excellence, finds its true light and inspiration. Yet even Plato, in the later Dialogues, gives some indication of having gone beyond this initial position of his. There, in effect, we find him arguing that something still higher than the Good is needed, which he identifies as the One, source of the many. The decisive step in this direction was not taken, however, until some six hundred years later when Plotinus, leaving no doubt as to his position, categorically declared the One the first principle, and its contemplation the highest knowledge. In Plato, then, and in his school, being is a secondary notion, overshadowed by both the Good and the One: by the Good because as end it offers, in this view, the higher explanation of things; by the One because, again in this view, it is a simpler notion, hence more basic and primary.

Aristotle, countering Plato's persuasion, stuck to the view that for the absolutely primary notion of things one had to go back to Parmenides, back to being; and furthermore, if in being lay the primary notion, in being lay also the proper object of the primary science metaphysics. This was no derogation to the Good and the One; for these notions, too, belong to every being and are both of them every bit as universal and scarcely less primary—transcendental they are, even as being. Absolutely speaking, however, being (to on) is prior; a thing must be before it can be one or good. Metaphysics, accordingly, is essentially the science of being.[24]

2. *The Three Conceptions of Metaphysics in One*

To define metaphysics as the science of being as being is at the same time to enunciate its proper object, or in

24 Cf. Text II, "The 'Subject' of Metaphysics," p. 244.

more adequate terminology, its subject of inquiry—*subjectum,* as the Schoolmen understand it. With the proper object as the point of reference it is not difficult, and logically quite consistent, to integrate the two other conceptions (science of first causes, science of the separate) with the third (science of being). For, the study of an object and the study of its causes may well pertain to one and the same science. This granted, the science of being as being should also seek out its causes (first causes, hence science of first causes), among which is God, the most immaterial, hence most separate cause (thereby, science of the separate). Thus, while there are three possible ways of viewing metaphysics, they are not exclusive—one implies the other. But only through one of them is its proper object formally stated, which is neither first causes nor separate being, but *being as being.*[25]

V. METAPHYSICS AND CRITIQUE OF KNOWLEDGE

Sooner or later the expositor of St. Thomas, of his metaphysics especially, must meet the issue that divides him most sharply from the moderns. Led by its most eminent representatives modern philosophy takes a wholly different attitude as regards the object of metaphysics and indeed as regards the object of human knowledge generally. In the traditional view the first and immediate object of knowledge is being, the being of external reality. But in the modern view the first and immediate object is not external reality but the mind itself, or its thought processes, to use a

25 Cf. St. Thomas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle,* Prologue.

not uncommon turn of speech. This difference in attitude is frequently epitomized as a transition from the dogmatic position of the past to the more critical and analytical stand of the present, or more succinctly still, from realism to idealism. How this "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy, as it has been called, came about is not now our main concern; yet some account of it is apposite to the moment, for it represents a complete *volte-face* in philosophical thinking, not least in metaphysics, where, though the name survive, the old meaning leaves scarcely a trace.

Consider, first, the general trend of medieval philosophy. Here, by and large, was a philosophy that has since come to be known as "realist." The mind, it was admitted without questioning, was ruled by a world of objects that exist apart from it and govern its content—"measured the intellect," in Scholastic idiom. Being, or reality, came first; thought, corresponding to reality, came second. Interpreted, this means that what the mind knows directly is reality; then, upon reflection, its thought of reality. Transposed to sense it means that when I look at a thing, what I see is the thing and not my sight of the thing. This is the attitude of common sense, and both the ancients and medievals as a whole, accepted it on that basis; it was, I mean, the most natural and obvious attitude to take—whether this makes them naive and uncritical we need not inquire. They did not, however, pretend that the question of the validity of knowledge was thereby settled. The truth of the matter is that the so-called objectivity (realism) of knowledge did not figure prominently in their speculations, since no acknowledged philosopher seriously doubted the common-sense view. And thus affairs stood until the dawn of modem philosophy.

Prophetic of the new order was Descartes. With him, as with his posterity, the first immediate object of certain, that is, indubitable knowledge is no longer external reality. But if not reality, what then? Thought, or the activity of thought, is adjudged the more immediate experience, hence the first direct object of knowledge. The effect of this inversion was to leave the mind cut off from reality. Descartes, it is true, felt that you had only to invoke his basic intuition "I think, therefore I am," and you found yourself returned to reality. His successors, however, would not be assured; to them, a return to reality from knowledge that was not in the first instance moored to reality seemed highly problematical, and was indeed impossible, the idealist postulate having seen to that. For, as this postulate would have it, what you know directly is what goes on in your mind—external reality, if known at all, is known as an inference, never as something actually experienced. Thought, accordingly, lies immured, its contact with outside reality irretrievably lost. On this common theme of primacy of thought over external reality, subjectivists and idealists of every description fathered forth tractates and treatises of endless variety. On one thing, though, all agreed: there could be no true philosophy that was not based on the idealist postulate.[28]

Obviously, the supporters of traditional philosophy could not remain indifferent to this development. Threatened, in effect, was the whole structure of their philosophy; and

26 Tire Translator has taken the liberty of enlarging somewhat on the author's résumé of the "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy. Nothing was added, however, that was not implicit in the author's own remarks. As for the manner in which Thomists have met the Idealist challenge, this is examined in detail in the subsequent epistemological (or criteriological) study of being, chapter 3.—[Tr.]

thrust upon them was the question: should they persist in regarding extramental reality as the unexceptionable starting point of philosophy, or should they yield to the moderns, adopting the reflective study of knowledge as their springboard, after which they would again take their stand with the metaphysics of realism?

Offhand, there appears no reason why a follower of St. Thomas should not undertake a critique of knowledge, a systematically conducted inquiry into its nature and validity, especially its validity. Not a few eminent Thomists have done just that. But all attempts are well advised of certain restrictions. The critique should not be considered the indispensable preliminary to metaphysics, nor be allowed to supersede metaphysics as the superior wisdom; but above all it must from the outset avoid the idealist principle of absolute inferiority, whereby thought is arbitrarily so impounded in the mind as to render direct access to reality impossible. On these conditions, an epistemology (a critique of knowledge) according to the mind of St. Thomas is quite possible and perhaps feasible.

Yet, when all is said, the true embodiment of wisdom still lies in a metaphysics that is at once realist and critical (self-critical, that is). St. Thomas states flatly that there is but one supreme science, and as supreme it does not hand over the task of justifying or defending its principles to another; it does it itself. "Metaphysics [sc. itself]," to quote his own words, "carries the argument to those who deny its principles." [27] This science must be grounded in realism, which is to say in being, assuming, as we do, that being is the first thing known by the intellect and constitutes its

[27] "Metaphysica disputat contra negantem sua principia" (*Summa theol.* Ia, q. i, a. 8).

proper object. Although it takes its stand on realism, this science will also be, in fact cannot but be critical (or criterioligical); for there are difficulties encountered as to the validity of knowledge, very substantial difficulties, which must be met by the science itself, there being none higher to which they can be referred for solution. Granted that the difficulties in question may be organized into a separate study, outside the context of metaphysics proper and under the heading, as is sometimes done, of epistemology or criteriology; nevertheless, there seems more to be gained, and more logic as well, in conducting the critique of knowledge within the compass of metaphysics proper. If nothing more, such a procedure does better to safeguard the unity of metaphysics; and better kept too will be the autonomy, the complete self-jurisdiction that belongs to it as first philosophical wisdom. In this, moreover, we have Aristotle's precedent, who incorporates a considerable criteriological section into his metaphysics, in the course of which he defends the first principles of thought against the subjectivists of his time.[28] We, for our part, shall follow Aristotle's example, so that after the next chapter, which is the metaphysical study of being, will follow a criteriological chapter, the critical examination of our knowledge of being.

VI. THE METAPHYSICAL WORK OF ARISTOTLE AND ST. THOMAS: PROBLEMS AND PROCEDURE

a) Aristotle's metaphysical production has given rise to some important literary problems. The principal one centers on the formation of the eponymic *Metaphysics,* a collection in fourteen books containing his essential thought on first

[28] Cf. *Metaph.* r, chapters 3-8.

philosophy. This collection, it is commonly realized, did not originate as a continuous composition, from one time and one effort. It is rather a compilation of writings, or parts thereof, which date from various periods of Aristotle's career. The present arrangement, moreover, stems not from himself but from his posthumous editors. For our purpose, however, it is not necessary, nor would it be feasible, to go into the literary problem the compilation poses; but we should at least indicate the basic groupings within the work as it now stands, since this bit of information is almost indispensable for intelligent reading of the whole.

Books A, B, r, E. Z, H. 0 (i, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9) constitute a sufficiently coherent body to be considered, for all practical purposes, a continuous development. Treated, after some preliminaries, are the following problems: the object of metaphysics (being as being, and the things pertaining to being as being); substance (the fundamental mode of being); act and potency. Books I and A (10,12) appear to have been independent compositions, yet in the plan anticipated by Aristotle they follow logically after the preceding group. Book I deals with the problem of the one and the many; Book A, after some recapitulatory chapters, with the primary substance (the first mover). Books M and N (13,14), though probably of different date, are closely parallel in content; both present a searching criticism of the (Pythagorean) theory of numbers and the (Platonic) theory of Ideas. This leaves Books a, A, and K (2, 5, 11), which it is difficult to fit into a pattern with the rest. As to content, Book *a* (2), whose authenticity is debated but generally accepted, deals mainly with the problem of nonregression to infinity; A (5) is scarcely more than an analytical lexicon, though a very valuable one, of philosophical notions, pertaining mostly to

physics and metaphysics; K (11) is a gathering of extracts from the *Physics* plus abridgments from B, r, and E of the *Metaphysics.*

b) Further complication awaits us in turning to St. Thomas, whose metaphysical work, on the whole, falls to two principal deposits.

The first is, of course, his Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* the first twelve books, to be exact. Concerning this Commentary, the opinion has been advanced that St. Thomas was only clarifying Aristotle's thought, refraining his own. The opinion is untenable. In the Commentary St. Thomas, it must be maintained, was not only spelling out Aristotle but also philosophizing on his own. What is true is that the Commentary of its very nature does not escape the hobbles and hitches of Aristotle's text, which, while perhaps sufficiently articulated, yet lacks that perfectly organic composition one might wish. In any event, the Commentary is not the complete metaphysical thought of St. Thomas. There are other developments of his on the subject, more uniquely his own, and these also must be appreciated before one can see his metaphysics in all its richness and amplitude.

The second deposit in point is found in his theological study of God as one *(De Deo uno).* Here again all is not in one place, though all is very much of a piece. There is the ample section in the *Summa theologiae,*[29] a whole book of the *Contra Gentiles,*[30] and an impressive array of parallel passages in various smaller works.[31] In these compositions

[29] *Summa theol.* Ia, qq. 2-26.

[30] *Contra Gentiles,* Book I.

[31] The most important of which are the *Quaestiones Disputatae* and not a few so-called *Opuscula.*

St. Thomas' thought is expressed more at large than in the Commentary, and its scope and penetration grow accordingly. But here, on the other hand, it is interwoven with the fabric of supernatural (as against natural) theology.

St. Thomas may be said to offer a twofold version of metaphysics: one whose source and methodology is purely philosophical but whose structure is noticeably grafted and underdeveloped; the other, more organic, excels in height and depth but has, for us, the disadvantage of being incorporated in theological dissertation. Between the two, we hasten to add, there is remarkable coherence of doctrine, albeit the preoccupations and the standpoints are not the same. In practice, nevertheless, the expositor of St. Thomas' metaphysics must, to keep his account orderly, make a choice. Either he adopts the strictly philosophical point of view and from the being of experience progresses to the being that is God (as in the Commentary), or he takes the theological approach, a more synthetic task, according to which God stands at the beginning of his inquiry and created being is elucidated throughout as his handiwork (as, for example, in the *Summa Theologiae*).

c) Our choice is the former. While not disregarding altogether the invaluable complement of the theological writings, our study follows the philosophical path of the *Metaphysics* and the Commentary. It begins, accordingly, with the being of immediate experience and advances by degrees to the being that is God, the natural culmination, it will appear, of the entire work as well as the keystone that firms it together. That done, we shall have an adequate view of St. Thomas' metaphysics but not, be it said, an exhaustive one. For such a view, it would be necessary to go consider-

ably further. The steps of our inquiry would need to be retraced and the basic positions we have established gone over again to be propounded a second time, but from the perspective of the theological treatment of God. The result would be, so to speak, a downward metaphysics, from God to creature, in contrast to the upward manner of the present work. To achieve it, however, would have made a more formidable task, and a more formidable volume, than lay to the purpose.

t CHAPTER 2

Being: *Metaphysical Study*

I. THE STARTING POINT OF METAPHYSICS

t AS Bergson justly remarked, every self-consistent philosophy starts from an intuition which governs its entire development. What Bergson was saying, in effect, is that the object of metaphysical inquiry must be sought in something first and unconditioned, hence not derived from or reduced to anything else, while everything reduces to it. It need hardly be mentioned that unless this fundamental of a philosophical system is properly identified and properly defined, there can be no firm grasp of the system.

In the case of St. Thomas there is no doubt what constitutes *the* root of his system; it is, unmistakably, being, from the apprehension of which, as from its generative source, issues every ramification of his metaphysical thought. St. Thomas, on this point, expresses himself as follows: "What the intellect first conceives, on the ground that it is the most known object, is being; and to being it reduces all its conceptions." Or, in his Latin,

Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit est ens.[1]

Thereby he expresses both the universality and the primacy of being, and of the corresponding notion of being. Every conception of the mind can, as we have just heard, be reduced to the notion of being; which implies that objectively, as well as conceptually, everything is being. This recognition that everything is being is absolutely primary; for it is a recognition of the object which, in itself,[2] is most known, that is, first and last and wherever anything is known.

Still, it is one thing to say that being is the first and most universal notion, and quite another to catch the full significance. There is, to be sure, a common acquaintance with being, and with the notion of being; but this is to know the thing but dimly, the seeds of knowledge, not the harvest. The mature grasp of the factors of being and its notion calls for minds disciplined to think and rethink philosophically. Nor even then will it all come at once, nor, *de facto,* in one generation. It is quite consistent that through the centuries the human mind has given, and still gives, much time and effort to the pursuit of being, to see what lies in this, its first and most universal recognition.

Parmenides, to speak for a moment historically, has already been mentioned as the first to see clearly that being

1 *De Veritate,* q. 1. a. 1.

2 "In itself," because in Scholastic thought what is most knowable in itself may not be most knowable to a given intellect. Of course, the being of popular experience is most knowable to the human intellect as well as in itself; but, as every real student of philosophy knows (and the author will make abundantly clear), the moment we crack the surface of being, mystery abounds.—[Tr.]

is primary both on the side of reality and on the side of thought. But Parmenides bore the tradition of the Physicists, the earliest Greek philosophers of corporeal nature, who saw scarcely beyond the realm of matter. The tradition left its mark; for though the Parmenidean being is immobile (changeless) and undivided, it is still nothing more than the sum total of the world perceived by the senses. Thus the ontology (science of being) of Parmenides could not but fail to rise above the corporeal level. Where he failed, Plato in large measure succeeded, not only, by the world of Ideas, surmounting the being of sense, but also restoring to being its multiplicity and becoming. Thereafter, by progressive discovery, Aristotle and still later St. Thomas will both of them strike the true notion of being —a notion transcendent and analogical.

The notion of being can be traced psychologically as well as historically; in other words, the unique circumstances in which the notion of being finds itself appear, perhaps most readily, when we stop to analyze the content of everything the mind conceives. For this purpose, any object of thought will do; it may be this desk before me, or the paper I write on, or the hand that does the writing, or even the gratification that comes over me when my thought meets perfect expression. I have but to pause to realize that all of these things or experiences are each of them some kind of being, and that if neither they nor anything else existed, I would have nothing to which to attach my thoughts—I would, indeed, have no thoughts. Even negations and privations are conceived in reference to being, after the manner of being. Take away being and no object of thought remains, and consequently no thought.

This conclusion is still more compelling from the analysis of judgment, the second operation of the mind, in which the act of understanding is completed. Essentially, judgment comprises a subject and another term that determines or qualifies the subject. The second term may take the form of a copula followed by a predicate, "the weather *is pleasant,*" or it may simply be a verb, "the sun *shines.*" In the first case the affirmation of being, that something *is,* is clear enough; but even in the second case being is truly affirmed, though implicitly. A judgment, then, is made in reference to what is, hence in reference to being. And this is true of every judgment, affirmative or negative; in one as in the other, there is an association of two terms telling of being, saying what it is or what it is not. Thus, in its perfective moment as well as in its first moment (first operation of the mind), every act of thought is determined by being and fixes on being. And since reality is being, to think is to form a conception of reality.

In summary: being is the first and most comprehensive object of thought. Since metaphysics is the science of what is first and most universal or comprehensive, its object, it follows, is being. However, the inner content of being, its metaphysical store, is not thereby told. We have therefore to probe the matter further.

II. THE METAPHYSICAL NOTION OF BEING

The object of metaphysics, we have said, is being. This is true—truer, indeed, than appears on the surface. For, formally speaking, the object of metaphysics is not being considered as the first object of thought, or being whose conception is the first notion of the intellect. The object of metaphysics lies deeper, and to reach it the mind must have

recourse to the third degree, the metaphysical degree, of abstraction, in which being is considered in utter separation from matter. Only then does the mind apprehend being formally; only then, that is, does the mind apprehend being as being, or being as such.[3] And this is the object of metaphysics: being as being, or being as such, prescinded from this or that mode of it.

The distinction just made is capital; the distinction, I mean, between being as the object of metaphysics and being as the first and most universal object of thought. It takes a while, even a long while, to rise to this distinction, to the level of metaphysical being. By nature the human intellect inclines rather to the things of the sensible world; the utterly immaterial is not its connatural milieu. And though, as we have seen, it necessarily conceives of everything and hence of sensible things as beings, the being it first finds in them is not that of metaphysics, unparticularized and matter-free, but that of the physical kind, particularized and matter-bound. There is, to be sure, in this common knowledge of sensible things a rudimentary grasp and awareness of being, but not of being as being, since in this order of knowledge being is not yet prescinded, or lifted, from its particularities. In short, the experience of being that fashions routine thought, and bases even the sciences, is all on the prephilosophical (i.e. premetaphysical) level.

Closer, but only closer, to the metaphysical state of affairs is the concept of being that emerges from its universalization on the lines of logic. Go back to the familiar experience of being alluded to a moment ago, the objects

[3] It is all the same whether we say "being as formally apprehended," "being as such," or "being as being."—[Tr.]

of daily acquaintance. It is relatively simple to subsume these objects under notions that are more and more universal, as in the Tree of Porphyry, where we find the series: man, animal, living body, body, substance. As it stands, however, the series is still open; for there is something still more comprehensive than substance, namely being, which comprehends everything and hence closes the series. Thus the mind has arrived at the logical universal of being. What it has done is to make a "total" abstraction of being, which means the abstraction of a logical whole from its inferiors. The notion thus derived is both most universal and, for that reason, most undetermined, containing as it does, though but implicitly, all the differences of being in its endless variety.

Because of the abstraction involved in its formation, this generalized notion of being already implies a measure of philosophical reflection, but the reflection is still pitched to the level of common understanding. More important, the notion, because of its universality, is sometimes mistaken for the formal or metaphysical concept of being which we shall examine forthwith, a confusion fatal to the grasp of metaphysics in the traditional sense. That it is a confusion should be evident, if not from what has gone before, then from what is to follow; which is by way of saying that the foregoing considerations have been but preliminary to the point in hand, the metaphysical notion of being. Having dwelt on what this notion is not, we are more ready to set out what it is; and the exposition, in one form or another, will run the rest of the chapter.[4]

A serviceable, though far from adequate cue can be found

[4] Cf. Text XII, "Concerning Being and Essence," p. 276.

in the very name "being," which translates the Greek participial noun *to on* and its Latin derivative *ens.*[5] Unfortunately, the English "being" does not do full justice to its Greek and Latin counterparts, at least in their metaphysical connotation. So that instead of "being," it would be more exact to translate "the something which is." This rendition points at once to two aspects of every being: a subject or receptor, "the something," and the actuation or determination of the subject, indicated by "which is." Metaphysically, the first aspect signifies essence *(essentia')-*, the second, existence *(existentia* or *esse).* Being, accordingly, is something whose actuality, or proper determination, is to exist.

The notion of being necessarily implies both aspects. Essence cannot be conceived except in relation to existence, and existence in turn calls for determination by essence. Still, it is possible when thinking of being to give attention more to one than to the other. This becomes clear when it is remembered that the word "being" serves both as noun and as verbal (participial noun). When being, the word, functions or is understood as a noun, its primary reference is to essence *(res);* what it says, in effect, is that being is *"what* is," yet not so as to exclude the relation to existence which, as we have indicated, is ever implied in the notion of being. As a verbal, on the other hand, being stresses existence; what it then tells, properly, is that being is "what *exists,"* but

[5] French: *être,* which, as the author remarks in the French text, were better read as *le étant,* truly a more felicitous rendition of the Latin *ens;* its allusion, however (being "is" or "isses"), is practically impossible to import into the English *being.* Perhaps the best we can do is to hyphenate, i.e. to give it as be-ing, with the thrust on the second syllable.—Translator's note.

again the other aspect is not eliminated, since existence is always correlative with essence, always the existence of something. So that, once more, being as we conceive of it comes forth as a composition of two inseparable aspects, essence and existence. However, the qualities of this composition together with its far-reaching implications are, at this stage of our study, far from told; we shall see to that later.[6]

One point should, however, be cleared up now, namely, the metaphysical meaning of existence. If the being which the metaphysician studies includes the aspect of existence, obviously a thing must be affiliated with existence to come under the object of metaphysics. But what kind of existence? Primarily, "being as being" (the object of metaphysics) signifies existence (esse) in its immediate sense of real and actual existence: ens *actuale,* as the expression goes. But "being as being" is not limited to this; for also to be included is possible being: ens *possibile,* i.e. anything capable of entering the world of concrete existence. Thus, whatever has been, or is, or will be, or could really be, under whatever mode or manner, is comprised under the object of metaphysics, yes even that which is affined to the concrete order of things by way of privation or negation.[7] One thing only is debarred, the being of reason (ens *rationis),* which is the subject of logic. The true being of reason does, no doubt,

6 Namely in chapter 7, Essence and Existence.

7 This view, however, that the being which constitutes the object of metaphysics includes possible being, is not unanimously held. See, for example, W. Norris Clarke, S.J., "What Is Really Real?" in *Progress in Philosophy* (Philosophical Studies in Honor of the Rev. erend Charles A. Hart), pp. 61-90; ed. by James A. McWilliams (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1955).—[Tr.]

have a foundation in reality, yet its very nature is such that it cannot, as a being of reason, exist in reality; it can only exist in the mind conceiving it. Consequently, it fails of inclusion in the metaphysician's domain, the order of concrete existence, actual or possible.

This can be schematized:

'being of reason

Being<

actuals.

real being<^ ^^object of metaphysics

^possible-^

We come then to another side of the problem of being; but first, a word in passing. Examined so far in the present chapter have been being and its notion for their metaphysical meaning according to St. Thomas; that is to say, examined and defined has been the formal object of metaphysics. This is only one step in the study of being, but the step that sets the course for the whole of it. Thus, while there is indeed more to metaphysics than the settlement of its formal object, there is nothing more critical; for the formal object, or rather one's view of it, shapes the rest of it. So that in committing ourselves to the view of being that emerges from the foregoing paragraphs, we have subscribed to a line of development for the whole of metaphysics. Also, further reflection, the exact determination of the formal

s

ens rationis

Ens-

ens reale-«<-"actuípe'\,^

possibile—^objectum metaphysicae

(metaphysical) notion of being is not only a necessary preliminary to the science, but has always been a thorny problem for the philosopher. Sooner or later he must ask: what is being? and sometimes, perhaps often, he has answered inadequately if not erroneously. Contemporary thought, on the whole, while exploiting the concrete or existential side of things, is in general disdainful of essential being. Tending to the other extreme are philosophers of the not too distant past by whom being is all but identified, if not actually so, with essence, to the exclusion or neglect of existence. For St. Thomas, as we shall have frequent occasion to repeat, being is neither essence alone nor existence alone but a composite of the two: an essence actuated by its ultimate perfection, existence.[9]

III. CONCERNING THE STRUCTURE OF THE NOTION OF BEING

We have said that the first notion of the intellect is being, that this notion corresponds to the most basic and most universal determination of things. We have further made plain that being comprises two aspects complementary of each other, essence and existence; whence its definition as "the something which is." But though all this is true, it does not yet touch the real problem concerning the notion of being. A universal notion, being yet differs from every other universal notion; it has characteristics all its own and cannot be dealt with in the common manner of

9 The metaphysician, to be sure, knows of a being that is not a composite but an identity of essence and existence; yet even this being is not conceived by us except on the lines of a composite. —[Tr.]

universals. In addition, it labors under an inner tension or opposition arising from its very structure; which again sets it apart from every other notion. Hence the problem, for the metaphysician, concerning the structure of the concept [10] of being. We must take stock of this problem and then see how St. Thomas and his tradition resolve it.

Recall, as a beginning, the universality of the concept of being, the most comprehensive notion that can be conceived. Everything in reality, whether actual or possible, falls under being, hence under the concept of being. How can the totality of things so diverse be united under one concept which will include them all, in their diversities as well as in their identities?

A comparison from logic will show what is at stake. In logic, a genus is reducible to a species, and vice versa. Assume, as illustration, that animals can be classified under two principal species, vertebrate and invertebrate. All animals, then, belong to the one genus *animal* and are divided into two species by their respective difference, vertebrate and invertebrate. Thus, in the language of logic, a genus is reduced or contracted to its various species by the addition of various specific differences. What makes such a procedure possible and permissible is that the differences concerned are not actually contained in the genus. Animal as such (i.e. abstracted from this or that kind) is neither vertebrate nor invertebrate. The genus, which unites all animals under one concept, is thus the principle of unity or identity; and the specific difference, which separates

10 Frankly, there is little difference between "concept" of being and "notion" of being; we shall, *pace* the purists, be using the terms quite indiscriminately.—[Tr.]

them into classes, the principle of diversification. But the point is that diversification of the genus is introduced from the outside, as it were; genus in short does not contain, actually, the specific differences.

Suppose we now try this maneuver with the notion of being, and see what happens. Being is multitudinous; wherever we turn we are surrounded by things, and things are beings. Yet one concept embraces them all, hence the concept has a certain unity; its meaning, in other words, must somehow apply to all the things it covers, else it would not be, as in fact it is, predicable of all. When, for example, I say "this table is," "this color is," etc. I mean that the attribute or circumstance denoted by *is* occurs, proportionately, in the table, in the color, and indeed in everything which is. However, I am also cognizant that the table has not the same mode of existence as the color (the color is in the table, the table is not in the color). This diversity inherent to the notion of being is further accentuated when we predicate being of transcendental (in general, immaterial) realities, and never more so than when it is predicated of God. God, too, *is;* but is his being commensurate with lesser realities? And if not, what is it that will differentiate him from other beings, and these again from each other? Will it be something that is not being? Impossible; for what is not being is nothing, and nothing differentiates nothing. Plainly, the differences of being must also be some kind of being. But then, how can they still be differences?

Whatever the solution, one thing is even now clear: the concept of being cannot be diversified[11] in the manner of a

[11] I.e. reduced or contracted to classes (species) and subclasses.—[Tr.]

genus, since there are no real differences that are not themselves being. The question thus boils down to creating distinction within a concept without resorting beyond the concept; or, to importing differences which are somehow there already. This, precisely, is the problem concerning the structure of the concept of being, a problem that can lead astray. For too much stress on the unity of being jeopardizes the diversity of it and of its concept; and overemphasis of diversity endangers the unity of it and of its concept. Ultimately, the first path leads to monism, a philosophical desert such as detained the Eleatics of old; and monism is only the foreside of pantheism. The second travels to the other extreme, so much plurification (differentiation) that being is robbed of community, failing which there fails the material of any organic thought. How, then, escape this dilemma, the Sylla and Charybdis of the metaphysical Odyssey? We escape it through the doctrine of analogy.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF ANALOGY

Preliminary note: analogy in St. Thomas and his commentators. To give a clear-cut view of the Thomistic teaching on analogy is not an easy thing to do. The considerable difficulties encountered stem in part from the fact that nowhere does St. Thomas develop the subject in full, nor in its own behalf. Thus, while he frequently speaks of analogy, it is always in application to some other point at issue. Such as it is, therefore, his teaching lies scattered over isolated treatments which, even in sum, do not afford a full exposition, to say nothing of the consequent problem of reconciling passage with passage so as to get a consistent body of doctrine. In this matter, then, the mere unraveling of his text suffices even less than it does elsewhere, and the

only satisfactory alternative appears to be reconstruction of his thought, with, of course, the systematic interpretation that reconstruction supposes.

Interpretive works of this kind have been provided by the great commentators of St. Thomas. They give a doctrine of analogy such as St. Thomas himself might have given—or did give, in embryo. The prime specimen, without a doubt, is Cajetan's *De Nominum Analogia,*[12] which can boast of a veritable school, so great has been its influence. A fellow commentator of rank, John of St. Thomas, does little more, *in re,* than reproduce Cajetan.[13] Between them they have the interpretation of analogy most commonly accepted by present-day Thomists. A certain number, however, professing themselves more faithful to the letter of St. Thomas, prefer Sylvester of Ferrara, who parts somewhat from his fellows.[14]

But whatever their own differences, Thomistic masters are as one in naming the principal adversary, Duns Scotus,

[12] Cajetanus, Thomas de Vio, De *nominum analogia et de conceptu entis,* edited by N. Zammit, O.P. (Rome: Angelicum, 1934). English translation and annotation by Edward A. Bushinski, C.S.Sp. and Henry J. Koren, C.S.Sp., *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1953; Duquesne Studies, Philosophical Series, 4).—[Tr.]

[13] Joannes a S. Thoma, O.P., *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus,* IIa Pars Artis Logicae, q. 13, aa. 3-5; q. 14, aa. 2-3. Nova editio B. Reiser, O.S.B. (Turin: Marietti, 1948), Vol. I, pp. 481-99, 504-13. English translation available in *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas;* trans, by Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, and G. Donald Elollenhorst (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 152-83, 190-208.—[Tr.]

[14] Sylvestris Ferrariensis, *Commentaria in Summam Contra Gentiles,* I, 34; in *Opera Omnia S. Thomae Aquinatis,* Leonine Edition (Rome, 1888-).—[Tr.]

defender of the univocity of being, or at any rate of its concept. Likewise disputed is Suárez who, in true Suarezian style, had taken a middle course, thus pleasing neither side. It is not for an introductory study such as this, however, to debate one school against another. Below, therefore, is simply an account of the doctrine of analogy such as, in our opinion, has the strongest support.[15]

1. The Meaning of Analogy

Popular as well as scientific thought abounds in the use of analogy. Things, as a matter of course, are said to be analogous when they bear some likeness to each other.

15 Books, articles, and monographs which deal, in whole or in part, with the doctrine of analogy are legion, their number testifying to the critical role this notion plays in metaphysical speculation. Among the more readily available works in English are:

Anderson, James F., *The Bond of Being* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1949).

Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald, O.P., *God: His Existence and His Nature,* Vol. II, in particular pp. 203-224, 246-267, 453-455; trans, from the 5th French edition by Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1936).

Klubertanz, George P., S.J., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, i960). Not the least merit of Father Klubertanz's notable work, which appears under tire Series "Jesuit Studies" and is subtitled "A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis," is the carefully assembled Bibliography, which, while not pretending to be exhaustive of the subject, nevertheless runs through some ten pages (303-313).

Phelan, Gerald, *St. Thomas and Analogy,* Marquette Univesrity Aquinas Lecture, 1941 (Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1948). An excellent introduction to the subject.

Not in English but now something of a classic is M. T.-L. Penido, *Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique;* Bibl. Thom. XV, sect, theol. II (Paris: Vrin, 1931).

These titles have been provided by the Translator.—[Tr.]

Philosophically speaking, however, not every likeness makes an analogy, and we shall see presently what is required for this.

In the Aristotelian scheme, analogy is first viewed under a theory of general logic, the theory of predication, which has only to be applied to the notable case of being. St. Thomas concurs in this approach, for he, too, generally introduces analogy as a mode of logical predication, the mode that is neither univocal nor equivocal but in between, analogical. These distinctions have therefore to be explained.

"Univocal" describes the term (word and concept) which is said of things (its inferiors) according to the same meaning in every case. "Equivocal," on the other hand, designates a term or word (never a concept) which is applied to things according to a meaning that is wholly different from one to the next. Thus, in "Peter is a man" and "Paul is a man" the term "man" is univocal; there is identity of meaning. But in "the bark is peeling" and "the bark awoke me" the term "bark" has obviously two completely different meanings. Between complete identity and complete diversity there is a middle ground, occupied by the "analogous" term (word and concept), which is said of many (its inferiors) according to a meaning that is partly the same and partly different in each case. So, in "intellectual vision" and "bodily vision" the term "vision" is neither univocal nor equivocal but analogous. On which general topic St. Thomas expresses himself thus:

It is evident that terms which are used in this way [i.e. analogically] are intermediate between univocal and equivocal terms. In the case of univocity one term is predicated of differ-

ent things according to a meaning [ratio] that is absolutely one and the same; for example, the term *animal,* predicated of a horse and of an ox, signifies a living sensory substance. In the case of equivocity the same term is predicated of various things according to totally different meanings, as is evident from the term *dog,* predicated both of a constellation and of a certain species of animal. But in those things which are spoken of in the way mentioned previously [i.e. analogically], the same term is predicated of various things according to a meaning that is partly the same and partly different: different as regards the different modes of relation, but the same as regards that to which there is a relation.16

This, then, is our preliminary finding: that analogy is an intermediate mode of predication, lying between the univocity of a logical universal and the equivocation of certain terms to which convention assigns disparate meanings. But this is not the whole of it. Analogy, in its further discrimination, denotes a relation, an agreement, a proportion—terms, all, which tell of one or the other aspect. In general, however, every analogical denomination bespeaks a relation, or relations, between certain things. And where there is relation there is community or a common element which, in the case of analogy, may be considered from two sides: that of the analogates, that is, the things which are related to each other, or that of the concept in which the mind

16 In *XI Metaph.* lect. 3, no. 2197 (Rowan trans. II, 788). Because of its special relevance it may be well to cite the conclusion of the above quotation in St. Thomas' Latin: "In his vero quae praedicto modo dicuntur, idem nomen de diversis praedicatur secundum rationem partim eamdem, partim diversam. Diversam quidem quantum ad diversos modos relationis. Eamdem vero quantum ad id ad quod fit relatio."

seeks to unify the diversity confronting it. In addition, analogy always implies order of some kind, and order presupposes a unifying principle. So that, in sum, true analogy requires i)a plurality of things 2)related to each other 3) according to a certain order and 4)brought together by the mind under one, unifying concept.

2. *Division of Analogy*

Both St. Thomas in a much-cited passage[17] and Cajetan in his distinguished work [18] propose a threefold division of analogy, though not all three in identical terms. Thus, what St. Thomas calls "analogy according to being but not according to concept," Cajetan designates more simply as "analogy of inequality." [19] Actually, however, this analogy by whatever terminology is more properly a case of univocal predication, except that the concept in question is realized more perfectly in one thing than in another (hence the "inequality" of Cajetan). So, in the ancient example, the generic concept "body" is univocal but realized unequally in the two species of body: corruptible and incorruptible. Since, as has already been intimated, being is not predicated univocally, this kind of analogy does not serve in metaphysics. What is left then are the two basic types: analogy of attribution (St. Thomas: of proportion) and analogy of proportionality.

a) *Analogy of attribution.* This is the analogy about which Aristotle is most explicit, applying it even to the

[17] *In I Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1.

[18] *The Analogy of Names,* chap. 1.

[19] St. Thomas, *loc. cit.,* "analogiam . . . secundum esse et non secundum intentionem."

special case of being considered as the object of metaphysics. The unity of the analogous concept stems, in this case, from the fact that all the analogates (except the principal) are referred to one and the same term (principal analogate). Thus, to take the classical example, food, medicine, and complexion are said to be healthy (puristically: "healthful") for the reason that food, medicine, and complexion are all related to health, the first two as causing or contributing to it, the third as indicative of it. Properly speaking, however, health is found only in the animal nature.

More precisely, in the analogy of attribution there is always a primary (or principal) analogate (or analogue), in which alone the idea, the formality, signified by the analogous term is intrinsically realized. The other (secondary) analogates have this formality predicated of them by mere extrinsic denomination. Health, to come back to our example, exists formally and intrinsically, i.e. really and truly, only in the animal. Yet food, medicine, and complexion are rightfully called healthy, but by reason of some association with health, hence by reason of something extrinsic to themselves, the health of the animal. Thus, to put them in order, the characteristics of the analogy of attribution are these. First, the form *(ratio)* in question is one, numerically one, and occurs intrinsically in one analogate only. Second, this form must figure in the definition of the other analogates. Third, the secondary analogates cannot be represented by a single concept but only by a plurality of concepts, among which there is, however, a certain inter-implication. Finally, it is worth adding that among the secondary analogates there is also a kind of

gradation, according to their propinquity to the primary analogue.

b) *Analogy of proportionality.* It will be remembered that in the analogy of attribution the (secondary) analogates are unified by being referred to a single term, the primary analogue. This marks a basic contrast with the analogy now under consideration, that of proportionality; for here the analogates are unified on a different basis, namely by reason of the proportion they have to each other. Example: in the order of knowledge we say there is an analogy between seeing (bodily vision) and understanding (intellectual vision) because seeing is to the eye as understanding is to the soul. We may, as St. Thomas himself does, represent this analogy in mathematical form, thus:

seeing : eye = understanding : soul

so long as we do not forget that the mathematical representation is only an illustration, not to be taken literally. Metaphysical analogy is not reducible to mathematical proportion, as should be apparent even from our example, there being no absolute equality (or identity) between the two relations in question.

What distinguishes this analogy most sharply from the analogy of attribution is that the nature or idea (ratio) signified by the analogous term occurs intrinsically and formally in each of the analogates. Consequently, even though there may be a primary analogate, the nature in view is not, as in attribution, possessed solely by this analogate. And whereas in attribution analogy is founded on the extrinsic relation of the secondary analogates to the primary, in proportionality its foundation, its ontological basis, lies deeper, consisting in the inner community among

things that are yet different and go by different names. Thus, in our earlier example, "seeing" and "understanding" are not the same thing, but both are truly and formally acts of knowledge. Furthermore, since the nature spoken of exists intrinsically in all the analogates, the definition of one analogate does not necessarily imply the definition of the others. I can, for instance, define "seeing" without reference to "understanding." On the other hand, because of their inner community all the analogates can be represented by a single concept, as, once more, seeing and understanding by the one concept "act of knowledge." Any such concept, however, will not represent the analogates adequately, nor will it have the perfect unity of the univocal concept. In the next heading we shall deal expressly with this matter, the unity of the analogous concept. At the moment we have a more general item still to report, the kinds of proportionality.

St. Thomas, in a passage which constitutes the principal reference for the doctrine of analogy,[20] divides proportionality into two kinds: metaphorical and proper. In the analogy of *proper* proportionality, which we have explained, the nature signified by the analogous term is truly and formally realized in each of the analogates—a point we emphasized. In *metaphorical* proportionality, on the other hand, the nature exists properly (and literally) in one analogate only, and figuratively (or improperly) in the others. So, for example, "smiling" is properly said of man only, but is predicated figuratively of meadow. The analogous notion may, however, be acknowledged to exist intrinsically in the meadow as well as in man, since a meadow is said to be smiling by reason of an intrinsic quality. As

20 *De Verit.* q. 2, a. 11 c.

for terminology, metaphorical analogy may also be called improper and mixed: improper by contrast to proper, and mixed because it combines a proper meaning of the analogous notion with one or more improper (i.e. figurative) ones. Metaphorical analogy is, moreover, part and parcel of daily speech, and theology itself employs it well and abundantly. But in metaphysics it has no role; it is not a metaphysical analogy.

Before passing on now to the next particular, we present a sketch of analogy which shows the essentials of our discussion to date:



ANALOGY:

of attribution
(the analogated nature exists intrinsically and formally in the primary analogate; it is attributed to secondary analogates by extrinsic denomination only.)

of proportionality:
- proper (the analogated nature exists intrinsically and formally in all analogates.)
- improper (metaphorical) (the analogated nature exists intrinsically and formally in one analogate, intrinsically but improperly or figuratively in the others.)

3. *Unity and Abstraction of the Analogous Concept*

This matter—in particular, the unity of the analogous concept—is of critical importance. A univocal concept, it will be recalled, has perfect unity or oneness of meaning. The analogous concept has no such unity; it is not, as we have seen, predicated according to a meaning that is absolutely the same in every case, but only partly the same and therefore partly different, too. Unity of some kind it must, however, have; otherwise it could not be predicated of different things according to a meaning that is in some way identical in each of them. The question of the unity of the analogous concept thus comes to this: how can a concept reduce a diversity to unity without excluding diversity altogether? Or, how can a diversity of things be brought under one concept when that concept must retain the diversity it seeks to unify? The question, let it be said at once, does not arise in metaphorical analogy, nor in that of attribution. In these there is not, as there is in proportionality proper, one concept which embraces all analogates; there is a plurality of concepts, specifically, a principal univocal concept which corresponds to the primary analogue and, for the derivative analogates, separate concepts but related to the principal concept. Health is predicated properly and univocally of animal. But the concept "health" does not cover "healthy food," "healthy medicine," and so on,; these have each its distinct concept but with a reference to the concept of the primary analogue.

In the analogy of proportionality, on the other hand, which is the basic metaphysical analogy, we meet with a single analogous concept for all the analogates, and this

because the nature (ratio) expressed by this concept exists intrinsically and formally in all of them. Thus, substance, quantity, quality, relation, and the other predicamental modes are each of them being, formally so, hence come under the unity of the notion of being. But then arises the question: how can the unity of a concept be truly maintained if it has at the same time to express a diversity, such as the diversity of being just mentioned?

Repetitious though it be, consider once more the case of the univocal concept, such as any generic notion. Here the unity or oneness of meaning is obvious. "Animal," for example, is a generic notion with a clearly determined meaning that applies in one and the same sense to everything of which it is predicated. The transition from the genus "animal" to its species is made, as we saw earlier, by adding the specific differences, which, and this is the point, are not actually included in the concept "animal." They are, however, included potentially, otherwise the generic notion could not receive them and thus be determined or contracted to its species. In short, the univocal concept is formally one and potentially divisible, hence potentially many.

The analogous concept also has unity, and it may also be diversified; but its unity is not the perfect kind of the univocal concept and its diversification is not effected by something from without—a circumstance best seen in the case of being, for what is not being is nothing. What this means is that the inferiors, or analogates, comprised under the analogous concept are intrinsic to it; consequently they are actually included and actually represented by the one analogous concept, but only implicitly so, or indistinctly;

as when I see a multitude of men, I see them all and know they are all there without looking at any one of them in particular.[21] The unity of such a concept is not that of an abstracted form, such as "animal" or "man"; rather, it is a proportional unity, founded on the real but proportional likeness which its analogated inferiors have to one another.[22]

21 In Scholastic phrase the analogous concept is said to be derived by an abstraction "of confusion," meaning that the inferiors, while actually contained or represented in the concept, are not contained clearly or distinctly or explicitly but "confusedly," i.e. indistinctly or implicitly.—[Tr.]

22 What is said in the text applies, of course, to every analogical concept. But since it is the notion of being that is most important in metaphysics, further illustration of its proportional unity may be to the purpose.

A concept, then, has unity if its meaning is unified or one. The analogous concept can have unity only if its analogates can be somehow unified under one formality. We have therefore to find that element in beings in which they are all somehow alike. If, then, with St. Thomas we define being as "that whose act is existence" *(id cujus actus est esse),* we shall have the common element, namely that in every being there is a relation or proportion of essence to existence. The concept of being is analogous because the relation of essence to existence is not identically the same in all beings but only proportionately the same. For example, existence is not realized in the same way in substance and accident, but both in substance and accident existence is proportioned to essence.

Briefly, the proportional unity of the analogous concept of being simply denotes that in all beings essence and existence are proportional to each other, without specifying any particular mode of proportion. All beings, accordingly, are alike in that all beings exist in proportion to their essence; and this is enough to give the notion of being a unified meaning. But this is not a perfect unity, or a perfectly unified concept; for then the proportion of essence to existence should have to be identically the same in all beings, which is ultimately to make all beings one—the doctrine of monism all over again. Still, we cannot think of being without drinking, at least

To say, then, that the analogous concept is one means that it is proportionately one; so that its meaning is not absolutely identical from one inferior to another, but only proportionately so. That it cannot be absolutely identical is clear when you remember what the analogous concept embraces: all the diversities of its inferiors, though but implicitly and indistinctly. Of course, we can pass from this unified and undifferentiated concept (say) of being to more distinct concepts, namely by explicit consideration of the mode corresponding to a given analogate and thus making our knowledge of the analogate more distinct. But it need hardly be said that we shall also be passing from the general

implicitly, of the different ways in which this proportion of essence to existence is realized or realizable. Hence, the notion of being includes, implicitly yet actually, all the diversities of being.

These remarks presuppose, to be sure, that being (as the text will shortly declare) is analogous by the analogy of proper proportionality. This analogy consists of a compound proportion, i.e. a proportion of proportions; e.g. 5:10 :: 10:20, etc.—only it must be remembered that the proportional equality of being is not an arithmetical equality. Now, we cannot think of the proportion 5:10, a proportion of doubleness, without thinking, at least implicitly, of the innumerable pairs of numbers that bear this proportion; indeed, the number is potentially infinite. Similarly, to repeat a point made above, we cannot think of the proportion of essence to existence without thinking, implicitly, of the many ways, the numberless ways, this proportion is realized or realizable. These infinitely varied proportions constitute the proportionality of being; and to think of the proportionality is to think, implicitly, of all the members of tire proportionality. Hence, the notion of being includes, implicitly and indistinctly yet actually, all the diversities of being; but despite these diversities, all beings are alike so far as in all of them is realized the proportion of essence to existence. The concept of being expresses this proportional likeness; hence the proportional unity of the concept.—[Tr.]

analogical concept of the analogate to a particular concept of the same analogate. So, the concept "being" represents all being and every mode of being—but none distinctly. We can make this concept more distinct and explicit by narrowing it, say to substance, or relation, or whatever predicament, even nonpredicament, as God and angels. But we shall have gone from the universal analogical concept of being to the far more restricted concept of one particular kind of being.

Metaphysics leans heavily on the analogous concept of the kind just analyzed; in fact, all its basic concepts are such. In this it differs markedly from other sciences, whose proper concepts are all univocal. This suggests, what is indeed true, that while metaphysics is by every canon a science, its scientific status is quite distinct, and its methodology will be similarly individual.

4. *Order and Principle in Analogy*

We have, to now, left hanging a topical matter on which the leading commentators of St. Thomas are not in complete agreement, namely whether every analogy requires a prime analogate. The analogy of attribution, it will be remembered, depends for its meaning on the secondary analogates being referred to a principal analogate, so that the latter is necessarily involved in the definition of the former. Of its very nature, then, this analogy implies an order of things in which there is some first thing as its principle, namely the primary analogate. Some authors, reiterating Sylvester of Ferrara, urge the question whether this characteristic should not be allowed to the analogy of proportionality as well. Lending considerable favor to the

suggestion is the fact that St. Thomas, or so it seems, speaks equivalently of analogical predication and predication graded according to priority and posteriority *(per prius* and *per posterius).* Every analogy, on this line of thought, would thus entail an order among its analogates, and if an order, then a principle or reference point upon which the order turns; which principle could be none other than a first analogate concretely determined.

In response, it can scarcely be denied that even in the analogy of proportionality there is a gradation, an order, hence some principle of order. But it is a fair question whether this principle is numerically and concretely one and thus a veritable first analogate, or whether it is only proportionately one, a principle of order arrived at through the assignment of relation among the analogates concerned. Take the prime example, the case of being, which, as we shall see, is analogous according to the analogy of proportionality. Can the analogy of being be established without explicit reference to the first being, that is, without going beyond the realm of the participated modalites of being?

The answer, it seems to us, is yes; it is possible to conceive an analogous notion without respect to a first analogate; to have, in particular, an analogous notion of being which does not involve explicit reference to per se, or self-existent, being. But it is clear that such a concept will not be the final one; the more ultimate structure of the analogical order, of the order of being in particular, comes to light only in the measure that the unity of the analogical concept is grounded on the unity of a first term in reality. The metaphysics of being, in consequence, is not complete until created being is seen in its essential dependence on self-

existent being, by very nature not dependent. Thus, while it is possible, in our opinion, to have an analogical concept of being without the concurrence of a first analogate, that there is such an analogate is not thereby denied; indeed, on this point all parties are in the affirmative but differ again on how it is arrived at, some taking the view that the analogy of proportionality suffices, others that recourse must be had to both analogies, proportionality and attribution.

Whatever the answer to that, it should be noted that in the analogy of attribution the first analogate, which is its principle of order, can be founded on more than one line of causality. St. Thomas usually points out three: material, efficient, and final causality, with the occasional addition of exemplary, ft is therefore quite normal when for the same notion or reality there appear several orders, hence several principles, of analogy. The most notable instance is, once again, that of being. According to material or subjective causality the order of the modalities of being is based on their relation to substance, the first and absolute subject. This is the approach Aristotle adopts in the *Metaphysics,* namely the consideration of being as primarily substance. If, on the other hand, we view being from the standpoint of extrinsic causality (material or subjective causality is intrinsic), the first analogate will not be substance but must be sought in the being that is the ultimate cause of substance as w'ell as of all other modalities of being, namely God, transcendent cause of all created being. This is the view St. Thomas usually takes, that is, the view of extrinsic causality, which, it must be admitted, is superior to the one of Aristotle in the *Metaphysics;* for in dealing with being from the standpoint of extrinsic causality we do not con-

sider it as subject but as *esse,* or according to its ultimate act—a notion to be more fully established in the chapter on essence and existence.[23]

V. THE ANALOGY OF BEING

i. The Notion of Being Is an Analogical Notion

From all that has now been said of its structure it should be obvious that the notion or concept of being, hence being itself, can only be analogical. Being, as a concept, is manifestly not equivocal; no true concept ever is. But even the word "being" is not equivocal, since (among other things) it does not convey completely different meanings. Nor is the concept of being univocal, for it cannot be diversified or contracted in the manner of a genus. It is therefore analogical, embracing as it does all the modalities of being both as to their differences and their identities. It is a concept that is at once differentiated and undifferentiated or unified, though not, of course, from the same point of view.

That the notion of being (hence being itself) is analogical is so clearly the mind of Aristotle that there can be no possible doubt of it; indeed, he may be considered the original exponent of the thesis. St. Thomas made the teaching his own, and after him Thomists consistently propounded and defended it. In opposition are Scotus and his followers. Scotus, to be sure, does not say that being, or the notion of being, is a genus; yet he insists that it is a univocal concept, hence abstracted from its inferiors by a perfect or complete abstraction and thus containing them only potentially. In Scotus' view, therefore, the notion of being has all the ear-

23 Namely chapter ÿ.

marks of a generic concept. The classical and, it would seem, unanswerable rejoinder to the Scotist position is this: if the different modalities of being are extrinsic or foreign to the concept of being, one wonders just what they are. What, in other words, is there besides being? Also, if the differences of being are not actually included in the concept of being, what way is there for them to diversify being except in the manner of true specific differences? But this is to give the concept of being the identity of a genus, with all the insuperabilities that entails.[24]

2. *Which Type of Analogy Is the Analogy of Being?*

Admitted that being and the concept of being are analogous, we have still to determine the type of analogy that pertains to being. The determination poses some difficulty, for in the analogy of being can be found characteristics of both principal types, i.e. attribution and proper proportionality—metaphorical analogy is obviously ruled out. There is no doubt, for one thing, that being is analogous by the analogy of proportionality. What makes it so, it will be remembered, is that all modes of being are being, formally and intrinsically. This page of print, its color, its size, these are each of them being, really and truly, and not merely by a denomination extrinsic to being, that is not simply by reason of some extrinsic relation to being, as the relation of food to health.

Yet there are also aspects of being that serve to bring it under the analogy of attribution. This, as a matter of fact, is the viewpoint of Aristotle, according to whom there is a

24 Cf. Text II, "The 'Subject' of Metaphysics," p. 244; Text V, "Principal Modes of Being," p. 256.

first analogate, substance, and other modalities of being are said to "be" by reason of some connection with substance. "Being," to quote him directly, "is taken in many senses, but all of them refer to one source. Some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, still others because they are processes toward substance, or corruptions or privations or qualities of substance. . . ." [25] St. Thomas himself applies the analogy of attribution to being from yet another aspect, the relation of created to uncreated being. Being, in this context, is predicated primarily *(per prius)* of God, who is self-existent (per se) being; and it is predicated secondarily *(per posterius)* of creatures, who are being only by participation and by dependence from the being of God.

In the case of being, then,—as for that matter with other transcendental notions: the one, the true, the good—we are confronted with a sort of mixed analogy which includes both proportionality and attribution. Analogy of proportionality is, however, generally admitted by Thomists to be more primary and more fundamental, at least from the standpoint of our experience of being. This granted, we shall say with John of St. Thomas that *being is analogous by an analogy of proportionality which includes, virtually, an analogy of attribution.*

What this means, in effect, is that the concept by which being is initially grasped is not sharply defined; it is a notion that admits of further determination, since it comprises under its proportional unity all the modalities of being which experience reveals. Upon analysis the modalities are found to occupy an order, or several orders, and thereby our concept of being is considerably enhanced. In the area

[25] *Metaph.* r, 1003 b 5 ff.

of material (intrinsic) causality there is one order, founded on substance, the primary modality in this respect. From the standpoint of transcendent (extrinsic) causality, whether efficient, final, or exemplary, there is further order and hierarchy, founded on the relation of participated to per se being, or God. Thus, while the concept of being has a goodly measure of meaning without explicit reference to the first principle of being, namely God, the full import of the notion will only be seen when the various modalities of being are recognized not merely as constituting an order, but an order that depends on the first being.[26]

3. *The Notion of Being and Metaphysical Method*

The conception of being that emerges from the foregoing analysis leads to some important conclusions as regards the science of metaphysics. To facilitate our account of them we shall first recapitulate the main points thus far established.

1. The notion of being as being is the end product of a distinct kind of abstraction from matter, which is properly called "separation" and which is performed on the level of judgment rather than that of simple apprehension. By this abstraction being as being is removed by the mind, not from reality nor from existence—indeed not, for the existent is the very object of metaphysics—but from all material conditions of existence; which is a far different thing from removing it from existence.

26 Not all authors explain virtual attribution in the same way. See, for one, H. Grenier, *Thomistic Philosophy,* Vol. II, p. 25; trans, from *Cursus Philosophiae* (Editio tertia) by J. P. E. O'Hanley (Charlottetown, Canada: St. Dunstan's University, 1948).—[Tr.]

2. The notion or concept thus acquired is found, on analysis, to contain two aspects, essence and existence, the latter proportioned to and determining, in the sense of actuating, the former. Hence the recognition: being is what is.

3. This notion has the structure or constitution of an analogical concept; which is to say, it makes only imperfect abstraction from its inferiors. Consequently, the inferiors are actually retained in the concept of being, though but implicitly or "in confusion." And because the inferiors are actually retained, the unity of this original concept is but a unity of proportion, hence an imperfect one.[27]

4. Basically the analogy of being is an analogy of proportionality, a conclusion imposed by the fact that all modes of being, even to their ultimate differences, are truly being. But within the multiplicity of these modes there is discoverable a definite order, based on their relation to the first being. Viewed from this order, being has a further analogy, that of attribution, by which the analogy of being is thus rounded out.

5. Because the notion of being transcends any and all genera of being and extends to all its modes and to their every difference, this notion is pre-eminently a transcendental one (in the Scholastic sense of the word).

What, then, will be the characteristics of the science whose object is represented in the notion of being here recounted? (With that, we return to the conclusions spoken of above.)

27 For some extended remarks on the meaning of "proportional unity" see Translator's note (note 22), p. 59.

a) The foremost characteristic is without a doubt its general orientation, which is decidedly toward the real. Metaphysics, in this view, begins and ends in reality. To be sure, it must, like every science, engage in abstraction—a double abstraction, at that; but this does not mean that it is cut off from the existent precisely as existent, nor from any of its modes. On the contrary, the notion of being signifies concrete reality itself, the whole and every last part of it. The reason, as we know, is that the notion abstracts imperfectly from its inferiors, which are therefore actually retained in it, albeit indistinctly or "in confusion." [28] Progress in metaphysical inquiry comes, therefore, not simply from the abstract analysis of concepts divorced from reality but rather from the very inspection of reality. Of course, concepts can be analyzed and systematically presented, as they generally are in textbooks and special treatises. But it must not be forgotten that in the Thomist view metaphysical analysis is mostly labor lost unless it stems, not only initially but continually, from contact with the complexity of reality itself and with the problems the complexity poses.

If, then, we compare the metaphysics of St. Thomas with other metaphysical systems that loom large in philosophical history, we cannot but be impressed by its originality. Thus, whether it be Plato in antiquity, or Scholastics of the Scotist and Suarezian tradition, or still later the whole modern school from Descartes to Hegel; by all of these, being is generally conceived in the manner of a nature, which is to say of an essence, dissevered, or nearly so, from existence and treated as an abstract entity. Ontology, in this line of thought, tends to become a purely conceptual construction,

28 See Translator's note (note 21), p. 59.

cut off from reality. Such creations may not improperly be styled essentialist ontologies. Far different is the consideration of being by St. Thomas, who, while not in the least neglecting that determination of it which corresponds to its essence, is ever intent and insistent on that other, that ultimate determination or actuality of it, its concrete existence.

b) If next we compare the concept of being—in the Thomistic sense—with other scientific concepts, those employed by science in the more current meaning, we find the former both superior and inferior to the latter. The inferiority, such as it is, lies in the imperfect unity of the concept of being; the superiority, in its content, which, as implicit, is inexhaustible.

As we have said, or as much as said, many times over, the analogical concept is in the idiom of the Schoolman a "confused," hence "inadequate" concept—the "confusion," to note it again, referring to the way this concept comprises its inferiors, namely indistinctly or in wholesale fashion. A concept of this sort does indeed deliver its inferiors to the mind, but not "adequately," not perfectly. Since the concept of being is analogical, what the mind thereby knows it knows inadequately and thus imperfectly; and never is this inadequacy more acute than when we apply the concept to the transcendent being of God, whose proper mode of existence escapes us altogether. Unlike metaphysics, other sciences operate with univocal concepts, which provide knowledge compounded of genera and specific differences, knowledge which, in itself if not always in the knower, is precise and distinct. On this score, then, and to this extent these sciences have the edge over metaphysics.

But the advantage is, as we have said, not all to one side. There are depths and dimensions of being not reached by the empirical method. Here metaphysics excels; for the metaphysical notion of being, and other analogical notions it employs, cut deeper and wider than the more familiar scientific notions, and together provide the mind with the wherewithal to discover areas of reality unknown and unknowable by the particular sciences. By these notions, to mention the prime instance, it is possible to gain some knowledge, however imperfect, of the very first principle of all being, even of God. Accordingly, by the method of analogy, the method proper to metaphysics, we have the possibility of an authentic science of theology. It is for the theologian, however, to spell out the role of the method in his science. Suffice it, then, to have called attention both to its limitations and to its real merits.

As before in regard to the orientation of St. Thomas' metaphysics, so now in the matter of its method comparison suggests itself with the famed essentialist philosophies of the past. And again we find marked differences. As by a natural propensity, every metaphysics of essentialist cast tends to become a rigid system, its whole development worked out deductively. Though not all the philosophers mentioned and alluded to previously display this tendency to perfection, it is no exaggeration to say that all of them yielded more or less to its attraction. Both Plato and Descartes give evidence of having been captivated by its promise, at least if the former's fascination for the dialectic (the method of the Dialogues) and the latter's dream of universalizing the mathematical method are any criterion. The consummation, however, of the deductive method is to be

seen in the *Ethica* of Spinoza and the *Encyclopedia* of Hegel. With them the expectation others had nourished is realized, the dream come true; or so it seemed. To derive everything by deductive reasoning from one first principle, that was the great passion; and both Hegel and Spinoza pursued it to the hilt.

St. Thomas, it need hardly be said, studiously avoids such a course. To be sure, his metaphysical universe is not less characterized by order and hierarchy than the universe of these more recent philosophers; and with him, too, reason governs every stroke of the metaphysical pen. But, presided over by the analogical method, his thought is far more tempered to the exigencies of reality in all its diversity. There is in it room for all that is, and all in its place, yet no being suffers violence to its nature. Order there is, yes, but pure construction, no. Indeed, if it is part of the wise man to give the order of things, *sapientis est ordinare,* then true metaphysical wisdom is precisely a work of order. And this the metaphysical work of St. Thomas is, a work of order—the veritable order of things.

t CHAPTER 3

Being: Crùerwlogical Study

t THE object of metaphysics is being, which is to say "that whose act is to exist (esse)." But being is also the object of our intellect. Thus, a Thomist epistemology begins with this fundamental: that the object of metaphysics corresponds to the object of the intellect. To accept this proposition is to take one's stand on the side of what has come to be known as philosophical realism. The metaphysics of St. Thomas, as for that matter almost all the great systems of antiquity, is a realist metaphysics. In a realist world the intellect meets things existing independently of it but which, in being known, measure and determine it. More simply, in a realist world there are things and we can know them.[1]

This thesis—that the mind knows things other than itself, or that the intellect is measured and determined by its object, and not vice versa—this is axiomatic in a realist

1 To be sure, there is an intellect which is not measured or determined by things but measures and determines them, namely the divine; and even the human intellect, in the practical order, is to some extent the measure of things.—[Tr.]

philosophy. It is also in accord with the deepest instinct of the human mind; we have, and we cannot escape, the impression that we know things "out there," apart from us and our minds, and that merely to know them makes no difference—to things. And yet from the beginning or nearly so, philosophy has had to contend, within its own ranks, with such as questioned or denied the validity of this fundamental experience. Aristotle had already to cope with them, as when he was impelled to defend the very principle on which all certitude rests, that of contradiction (or noncontradiction); this had come under fire from the Sophists, the "subjectivist phenomenalists" of the time. Later came the Skeptics, who admitted nothing to be true, devising to their purpose no end of specious arguments.

As for modern thought, it has consistently bent its efforts against realism, and this among its leading representatives, Descartes being but the first of many. Inevitably, the renuntiation of realism in knowledge carried over to metaphysics, so that pitted against traditional metaphysics, which rested on the premise that being is prior to and determines thought, were now various systems which stood on the primacy of thought over being, which is to say, on the general assumption that what we know first and last and always is a thought, never a thing.

The epistemological problem thus lies at the heart of modem (if not contemporary) philosophy. Nothing else has so preoccupied it, and again the question comes up to which we addressed ourselves briefly in the introductory chapter: Can metaphysics be solidly established without first inquiring into the validity of human knowledge? We thought it not only possible but that the normal life of the

intellect indicates and justifies such a procedure. This granted, it should nevertheless be evident that philosophical positions as important as the ones adverted to above cannot be simply ignored. Besides, the question of human knowledge poses serious problems to the realist as well as to the nonrealist or idealist. Accordingly, having but touched on it in our introductory chapter, we shall now make a more extensive study of the problem of knowledge, more often and perhaps more formally named the "critical problem." In this, as indicated, we have the precedent of Aristotle, who also considers the arguments that had been raised against the validity of knowledge, and right after he has set forth the object of metaphysics.

The discussion to follow will deal only with the fundamental aspects of the problem at hand. Primarily, these are 1) the realism, or objectivity, of the first object of the intellect and 2) the validity of the principles, commonly called first, which flow immediately from the first object. Before discussing these cardinal points, however, it will be necessary to trace the critical problem to its roots and to attend to the difficulties, real or alleged, which begot it. Altogether, then, we have four principal headings:

I. Critique of Realism
II. Starting Point of a Thomist Epistemology
III. Concerning the Foundation of Realism
IV. First Principles

I. CRITIQUE OF REALISM

If realism is the doctrine that we have true and direct knowledge of an objective world, then the opponents of

realism are those who deny this knowledge. Their grounds for denial are many and varied, but mostly the case against realism centers on three themes.

First Theme: Objections of the Skeptics

These objections constituted the brunt of the attack against realism in ancient thought; but modern philosophy, too, notably in Descartes and his successors, has never wearied exploiting them. These objections primarily are appeals to the fact of error and deception in human knowledge, a fact of which the skeptic has at all times made much capital. Every occurrence thereof is for him an argument against the trustworthiness of man's cognitive faculties. If the senses, not to say the intellect, deceive you once, they can deceive you forever. This, in essence, is his thesis.2

Perhaps no one in modem times has developed this theme more relentlessly than Descartes.3 He begins by questioning the reliability of the senses. Experience, he says, is witness that the senses sometimes deceive me; consequently, it would seem the better part of prudence not to trust them unreservedly. Even those sensations which, because of their intensity or immediacy, convey the strongest

2 In a sense the skeptic is right; if the senses could deceive us even once in regard to their proper object, we should indeed never know when to trust them. Hence the importance of the traditional threefold distinction of sensibles: proper, common, and incidental (per accidens).—[Tr.]

3 See the *locus classicus* in the *Meditations,* I ("Of the Things on Which We May Doubt"); trans, by John Veitch (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1901). There are more recent translations, but Professor Veitch's still does it as well as any.—[Tr.]

impression of objective reality must be held suspect; for in many a dream I have had similar impressions, only to wake and find them illusions. Nor is the taint of error confined to the senses. Reason itself is affected, so as to lie under deception even in mathematics; an assertion the more remarkable that it comes from the man who honored mathematics above all human wisdom. Yet this is outdone when Descartes, at the height of his critical mood, entertains the supposition that for all we know we are under the spell of an evil genius, of some deceiving god, to the effect that we labor under irremediable illusion in matters, even, regarded as most certain.

For all his doubting, however, Descartes did not succumb to skepticism. The way out, he felt, had been ensured by withholding doubt from the first recognitions of the intellect, foremost from the Cogito; for, if thought, then a thinker whose existence was thus unquestionable. From this bridgehead he would launch the general recovery of human knowledge and get on with the constructive side of his philosophy. But whether this strategy saved the situation for Descartes is something else again. More to the immediate purpose is the skeptic's conjuring up of errors of knowledge to prove that the mind (the senses included) is delivered to doubt. If, to repeat, I have been deceived before, and that in my most confident moment, what possible assurance is there that I am not now deceived, now and forevermore? Error, in short, is an incontestable fact. And since it is, does not all knowledge lie discredited? The question is the skeptic's and, with him, is not rhetorical. Our answer comes later in the chapter.

Second Theme: Immanence of Knowledge[4]

It is also contended by idealists generally that realism rests on a supposition that will not stand stubborn analysis. To illustrate the contention we may turn to the French philosopher Hamelin, a typical idealist.® The basis of realism, according to this critic of it, is the duality of "being that is thought" and "being that thinks," 6 in other words, the duality of subject and object. On this supposition, to think (or to have an idea) could only mean that there is in the one (being that thinks) an image or representation of a real attribute possessed by the other (being that is thought). Essentially, then, knowledge would consist in having a double of reality in the mind. Now, this manner of regarding it goes back to simple folk, who are not given to questioning such matters; whereas critical reflection will show it to be a pure absurdity, on a par with the ridiculous assertion that an image or representation is a picture inside the mind of something outside the mind—as though one could attain or even speak of something outside the mind.[7]

4 Refers to the fact that knowledge is an immanent activity as opposed to transitive action. More specifically, immanence of knowledge means that to be known a thing must somehow be in the mind; from which the idealist concludes that the mind can only know itself or its ideas, and cannot get outside itself, so to speak, to lay hold of the external object—if indeed there is such an object. Some idealists question even this.—[Tr.]

6 See Hamelin, O., *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation* (Paris: Alcan, 1907, First Edition).

6 French: *l'être pensé et l'être pensant;* which captures the idea rather more neatly than can be done in translation.—[Tr.]

7 This is typical idealist stock-in-trade—namely that it makes no sense to speak of knowing something "outside" the mind. Cf. note 4—[Tr.]

In a word, thought is at once subject and object, and there is no substance to the naive disjunction of thinker and thing thought.

But that is not all. Realism (continues Hamelin) stultifies itself quite as much as another ground, the origin of ideas. If, as in realism, ideas must originate from an object which is not the subject, this could only be explained through a kind of transitive causality, that is, through the transmission of species or qualities from the object to the mind. In this conception, it is as though the object literally sent out facsimiles of itself, which then traveled to the mind—a grossly materialistic explanation of knowledge which had made its way into philosophy as far back as Democritus and Epicurus. Happily, it was laid to rest for good by Descartes, and with it went the "winged species" of the Scholastics. Nor are matters improved by adopting the perceptionists' tactic of eliminating every intermediary between thought and reality. This avoids the absurdity of darting images, only to fall into the mystery of an unsubstantiated immediacy.

To put it squarely, there is no overcoming the difficulties of realism, and the best advice would be to give up the chimerical enterprise of trying to make good the primitive notion that thought involves a duality of thing and thought, or that what is represented in the mind has a counterpart outside the mind. The fact is that the represented is not outside the representation. Etymologically, perhaps, the representation argues a subject and object having each an existence apart from it; the real state of affairs, however, is quite the opposite. The very representation is both object and subject. (But this would make it reality itself; which is

precisely what Hamelin claims for it.) The representation is being, and being is the representation.[8]

So much, then, for Hamelin on realism and its alternative, a typical idealism.

Third Theme: Activity of Knowledge

Opponents of realism feel themselves further justified in the role which the mind, they are sure, exercises in the production of knowledge, a role far different from what realists would have us believe. For, do not the latter regard the mind as a purely passive power, inert before an external object which presumably acts upon it? Yet witness Kant, who testifies that the understanding,[9] far from being intuitive (a passive spectator) is essentially active and by nature engaged in synthesizing the presentations of sense. More emphatic still are Fichte and Hegel who, pursuing this Kantian premise to the finish, emerge with the absolute idealism in which the mind is cast as pure activity, absolute and unconditioned. Here, then, we have the self that is self-posited, nothing whatever being presupposed—to the self.

Proponents of these bold idealist conceptions do not want for what they feel to be solid arguments. Much is made, to cite a prime example, of certain features of scientific thought. Advances in this area are to all appearances in direct proportion to the mind's ability to project its own

[8] Thus, Hamelin does not shrink from pursuing the idealist premise to its logical conclusion; for if the mind can know only itself or its ideas, from that it is but a short step to the contention that ideas are the only existents (at least for tire mind). Hence his dictum that "the representation is being, and being is the representation —[Tr.]

[9] In general, Kant's word for mind.—[Tr.]

object (thus the argument). Nowhere is this more evident than in mathematics. The figures, symbols, and numbers which are studied are first constituted through an activity—a construction, summation, or calculation—which the mind clearly recognizes to be its own. Indeed, the mind is capable of mathematical determinations—be they quantitative, spatial, or numerical—which it cannot visualize to itself, such is its fecundity in this regard. Much the same state of affairs is seen in the experimental sciences. You will come across in an experiment only what the mind has first brought to it by way of hypothesis or directive idea. And if we go from hypotheses to general theories, in which the knowledge science has attained at a given moment is epitomized, there again we cannot but marvel at the creative fecundity of the human intellect. All of which leads to the one conclusion: in the mathematical as in the scientific endeavor, what governs the working of the human mind is the idea pure and simple, free of all determination from without.

Further evidence that the mind constructs its object is found by idealists in the intellectual judgment, by common accord the perfective moment of the intellectual process. A judgment, at least a necessary one, expresses a relation which cannot possibly have been got in experience. Here, as Kant remarked apropos of the a priori judgment, the sole determining factor is the mind. Or, if you prefer Brunschvieg, the exteriority which trails the mind's judicative operation is not an exteriority at all but stems from an inborn proclivity of the thinking self. It is as though the mind, by nature denied its external object, affirmed it with a vengeance; idle protest, however, which proves that the mind has, not an external object, only the necessity to assume it.

Finally, there is the argument that realism—by its doc-

trine that knowledge is determined by the external object—destroys or impairs the autonomy which is part and parcel of the mind's essential vitality. Materialism, which places a necessity upon every event, is obviously incompatible with the untrammeled spontaneity that marks the autonomous self. But realism comes under the like indictment, so far as it maintains the mind's initial dependence upon the external object. Allow this, and never are you truly free. Only in idealism, which dispenses with the external object, can the human person be assured of the dignity which must be claimed for it.

To sum up (for the idealists). All the aforesaid arguments, and many more besides, support but one verdict: that the human mind is all activity, free and self-determining, with not the merest dependence upon an assumedly transsubjective object.

II. STARTING POINT OF A THOMIST EPISTEMOLOGY

Historically, as is well known, the course of philosophical thought was mostly along the natural line of realism. Knowledge, it seemed obvious, began with external objects which, however one explained it, determined thought. In the foregoing paragraphs we have heard various criticisms of this position. Are these criticisms compelling? Do they render untenable the historically prior ground of realism? If so, we must abandon the habit of thinking that knowledge begins with being, extramental being. In its stead we shall have to adopt the idealist principle that the starting point lies within, in thought alone, as exemplified in the *Cogito* of Descartes or, most extreme, in the unconditioned positing

of the self, advocated by idealism such as Fichte's. Thus the issue is met. Will it be realism or must it be idealism? The validity (or invalidity) of the idealist case will tell.

1. General Appraisal of the Skeptic and Idealist Criticism

Skeptics and idealists allege facts of experience in support of their criticism against realism. On the whole, realists do not question their facts, but they do challenge their conclusions. Accordingly, we shall indicate the general line of defense against their pleadings.

a) *Objections of the skeptics.* These, as we have seen, played on the undeniable fact of error. Sometimes we are deceived; we think this but the truth is that. Does it follow that we are always in error, or that the human mind is constitutionally incapable of arriving at truth? Skeptics have said yes; if once deceived, I am always deceived. But is the consequent necessary? or is it not rather an obvious sophism? Besides, error or being deceived could have no meaning unless I knew what is meant by truth or not being deceived. But most of all, if I am always deceived, then why not in the announcement of this belief? So that complete skepticism, as Aristotle had pointed out, is self-devouring. To be consistent the unrelenting doubter must not say a word nor even make the merest sign; which, to speak in Aristotle's vein, equates him with the vegetable. Granted that error visits the mind, we are not thereby enslaved to skepticism. But we are reminded to search out the real nature of truth and its opposite, error, and to find the means for discriminating the one from the other. Error, in short, calls for criteriology; that and nothing more.

b) *Immanence of knowledge.* It is impossible, the realist

is told, that knowledge bring about a union of two things which exist in separation from each other. Knowledge is an immanent activity, immanent to the thinking subject. Hence, what I think must be in my thought, and what is not in thought is unthinkable. These and similar expressions are standard weapons in the idealist arsenal, and as a matter of fact there is a sense in which they are true. The idealist, however, construes them in a way to give a completely false impression of realism. In sound realism there is no question, as idealists imagine, of throwing a bridge between two separate and opposite worlds, between thought and the thing in itself—*Ding-an-sich,* in the Kantian phrase. The union of thing and thought is a primary datum, something given, not contrived. When a thing is known it is by that very fact present and related to the mind, and in this sense it is quite true that what is not in thought is unthinkable. The problem for the realist, then, is not whether the external object links with the mind but how, or by what agency, it does so.

Idealists object that the alleged union of mind and reality rests upon impossible ground; thought, it is said, would have to emerge from its immanence so as to lay hold of things. To depict the matter thus implies a grossly materialist view of immanence or inferiority. Why, in other words, cannot activity be immanent and still point to something trans-immanent? To say that the ideas which make up my thinking are anchored in the mind proves nothing; for while this is undoubtedly true, there is also the very real impression that through them I am in touch with an external world, a world exterior to my consciousness. Admittedly, there would be an element of mystery in this commerce between

the inner and outer world. But not a little mysterious, also, is that anyone should bar the possibility of it, unexamined or in principle.[10]

c) *Activity of knowledge.* Not only in the elaboration of scientific thought but even in its simplest operations the human mind is active, in fact creative. No one denies this. But what follows from it? That the mind all alone produces its object? Or that in its activity it is not at all conditioned by something other than itself? The facts of the matter point the other way. Knowledge, as even rude analysis attests, involves passivity as well as activity. And if, in one respect, the object of knowledge appears to be of the mind's making, it also gives many indications of being just the opposite, something given, not made; in fact, the aspect of givenness is the prime impression.

In any event, the complex of knowledge can stand far closer examination than it sometimes receives, even from philosophers. So, for example, it is by no means self-evident that the mind alone is responsible for the determination, that is, for the structure of the object of knowledge, nor that knowledge is solely activity rather than a concurrence of activity and passivity. To slight one or the other aspect distorts the whole picture. Thus, to say in the Kantian fashion that the understanding is a power of a priori synthesis may have some justification, but it tells us next to

10 For an exposé of the idealist fallacy (particularly of the postulate that the mind can know only its ideas, and of the so-called "ego-centric predicament" on which the postulate rests), see Celestine N. Bittie, O.F.M.Cap., *Reality and the Mind,* chapter 9, "Fallacy of Idealism" (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1936; Twelfth Printing, 1953). It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that this is the finest chapter Father Bittie has ever written.—[Tr.]

nothing of those elements (data, if you will) of the synthesis which present themselves ready-made. Experienced reality is more, and more complex, than is allowed to meet the Kantian mind.

As for that other side of the question, the idealist's dedication to the autonomous self, his prepossession with the freedom or emancipation which he regards as the very sustenance of the mind,—all this can be given its proper place without having to deny in principle every dependence of this selfsame mind. There may be a mind or self which enjoys perfect autonomy, but there is no indication that it must be ours. On the contrary, the self we experience tells, not of clear and uninhibited autonomy, but of much involvement with what is or seems non-self.

All in all, skeptics and idealists have case enough to command a hearing. Truth and error, immanence and transcendence, activity and passivity: these are questions for any theory of knowledge. But the particulars adduced by skeptics and idealists do not compel us to abandon realism in principle, as though to be ruled out even as a possibility; nor do they prove that being is reducible to thought. In short, realism does not thereby stand convicted; after the arguments heard above, its possibility (to say no more) as a starting point for knowledge still survives. Indeed, the tables may be turned to ask whether any other possibility exists. And this brings us to the next heading, a review of how some recent Thomists would resolve the problem of knowledge.

2. *Some Attempts Toward a Critical Thomist Realism*

Within recent decades a number of Thomist philosophers have bent their efforts to a critical theory of knowl-

edge which, while expected to culminate in realism, would not postulate it at the outset. Initially, a sort of neutral ground is proposed on which both realists and idealists could agree, in the hope they might still find themselves at one at the end of their respective roads.

Obviously, the mutually acceptable point of departure could not be in external reality; it must therefore be in the realm of the mind, a mental experience that is absolutely first in the order of reflective thinking. Such is the Cogito of Descartes, but with a proviso. For, according to these Thomists the *Cogito* admits of a preliminary moment which prescinds from the question whether (as idealists maintain) it commits the mind to an interiority from which there is no escape or whether (as the same Thomists anticipate) it can unlock for the mind the door to external reality. I think (so the *Cogito),* and it is impossible to doubt that I think when I am actually thinking. At this point, however, I do not know, rather do not care to know, what my thinking ultimately implies—possibly an external world. This I shall know only later, after the analyses which will tell me the import of thinking, its eventual referent. Briefly, the starting point is the fact of thought pure and simple; then by reflection I inquire after the meaning, the full implication, of the act of thinking.

One of the more earnest efforts in this direction comes from the much-respected Roland-Gosselin, who states his initial position as follows: "From the standpoint of critical reflection the study of the mind rests squarely on the fact that the act of thinking can grasp itself immediately in self-consciousness. In the act of reflection there is perfect homogeneity, that is, identity of knower and known, and the identity is immediately evident, so that no subsequent

reflection upon this first reflection can throw it into doubt or obscurity. Here, then, in the initial act of reflection revealing the identity of knower and known, is an absolute point of departure because it is first an absolute point of return, the ultimate turn-back of the mind upon itself." [11] Thereby, it is believed, is established the sought-for initial contact with idealism, without as yet any commitment as to the outcome of the stand agreed upon. "Like idealism," to quote him further, "we shall begin by considering first of all the operation of the mind, specifically the judgment, and simply as a factual relation between a subject and object. .. . And why begin thus? Because there is no reason that we should obligingly abandon to idealists the advantage of a solid position, of an unassailable base of operation." [12]

But is it unassailable? Or, perhaps more to the immediate purpose, does it have any support in St. Thomas, who regularly develops his thought from the supposition of realism? But at least on one occasion, we are told, he cleared the way to the kind of philosophical reflection that would base everything on the awareness we have of our intellectual activity. A passage in *De Veritate* has often been so interpreted, one which Msgr. Noël[13] does not hesitate to match with portions both of Descartes' *Regulae* and Kant's First Preface to his *Critique of Pure Reason,* namely, where these philosophers urge a general critique, styled on the reflec-

11 Roland-Gosselin, M.D., O.P., *Essai d'une étude critique de la connaissance,* p. n (Paris: Vrin, 1932. Bibl. Thom., XVIII). Translation mine.—[Tr.]

12 *Ibid.* p. 35.

13 Noël, L.,*Notes d'épistémologie thomiste,* pp. 59-60 (Louvain: Institut Supérieur, 1925).

tive (introspective) method, of our faculties of knowledge. The passage in question is this:

> Truth ... is in the intellect as a consequence of the act of the intellect and as known by the intellect. Truth follows the operation of the intellect inasmuch as it belongs to the intellect to judge about a thing as it is. And truth is known by the intellect in view of the fact that the intellect reflects upon its act —not merely as knowing its own act, but as knowing the proportion of its act to the thing.[14]

St. Thomas goes on to specify that this proportion cannot be known without knowing the nature of the act, nor the nature of the act without knowing the nature of its principle, the intellect, "of whose nature it is to be conformed to things." [15] Then follows the (reputedly) crucial conclusion, namely, that it is by an act of reflective knowledge that the intellect attains truth.

Far be it from us to discount the significance of this passage, which (whatever else be said of it) states very exactly how the intellect arrives at awareness of the truth value of its act. To see it, however, as inviting a reflective epistemology, such as now under view, that would seem to be overdoing the sense of it. Actually, those who stand on immediate realism without first resorting to a critique of the mind's activity could also claim support from the passage. The fact of the matter is, however, that when writing these words St. Thomas was not thinking of the kind of epistemological issue on which he is here summoned to testify.

[14] *De Vent.* q. 1. a. 9; trans, by Robert W. Mulligan, S.J., *Truth,* Vol. I (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952).

[15] "in cujus natura est ut rebus conformetur" *(ibid.).*

All that aside, the question remains whether it is possible, without prejudice to the genius of Thomism, to institute a reflective critique of knowledge that would imply neither idealism or realism. Decidedly not, says Professor Gilson. Like others but with the brilliance that has become his hallmark, he has made it clear he wants no part of "critical realism." [16] The very words should stick in one's throat; a "criticalist" can never, never be a realist. Professor Gilson is no doubt correct if the word "critique" is taken in the Kantian sense, which in effect rules out realism from the start. Others however, Maritain for one, do not believe that "critical" philosophy should simply be defaulted to the idealists—if the term be freed of every subjectivist (idealist) presupposition.

But to get on with the more substantive matter of Professor Gilson's argument: Philosophical systems, he avers, have an inner logic which controls their development. If we begin with the doubt and the *Cogito* of Descartes, or with the transcendentalism of Kant, we have barred all access to reality and must necessarily land in idealism, with no hope of escape. Or, if your initial step is knowledge in isolation from reality, you will never find a way to reality. This does not mean, however, that our only recourse against the idealist position is to fall back on the native propensity of man to be or act as a realist. Indeed not; for Thomistic realism is a reasoned or reflective realism, one which I am perfectly aware of the reasons for holding. It rests, not on some obscure instinct, but on the evidence I have that my knowledge relates to and depends on a real object. However,

16 See especially Gilson, E., *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1939).

even with this initial datum in hand, there still remains, from the standpoint of epistemology, a considerable task to perform. For, while the fact of being related to an external object is immediately evident, not so the manner and means by which the relation comes about. In addition, there must be a critical search into the various forms and phases of knowledge to determine the exact role of each and the relation of one form or phase to another. Through this extensive labor of reflection and analysis the realism which is natural develops into a realism which is truly philosophic or methodic, yet so as not to entertain at any time the supposition that my thinking may possibly be all subjective. Thus Professor Gilson.

But which side to choose? Those who maintain that the critical study of knowledge must from its inception give assent to realism under pain of idealism? Or those of the opinion that this assent (if it comes) can come later, whose preference then is to begin with the bare fact of knowledge, nothing said or assumed as to its transsubjective validity? The answer, we believe, depends on what one makes of yet another question, whether it is possible to conceive of knowledge without implying its relation to reality.

To the purpose is a Thomist distinction of knowledge, that of sensations and simple apprehensions on the one hand, and judgments. The distinction is important as regards the perception of truth, or the conformity of thought with thing. Formally, or as known and recognized, truth occurs only in judgment. In sensation proper and in simple apprehensions the mind does not yet know if it has truth, because it has not yet reflected on itself nor, in consequence, adverted to its standing relative to the object it knows.

This relation of thought or the thinking subject to the external object is not revealed except in judgment. Accordingly, it must be admitted that there is a moment in knowledge when the object does not appear in clear distinction from the subject. We should hasten to add, however, that at this stage, when the formation of thought is still in course and incomplete, knowledge itself has not yet entered the focus of awareness; it is as though the subject were wholly absorbed in the object, and not in itself. But the moment I reflect, as is normal, on my act of knowledge I become expressly conscious of my thought; in the same breath subject and object are seen clearly distinct, and my knowledge seen to be true.

The point to be made here is that the reflective work of the mind together with the discoveries that accrue from it presupposes that I have advanced from simple apprehension to judgment. Knowledge, then, may mean more than simple apprehension; it may mean that an object has been not merely presented (as in apprehension), but clearly opposed to a subject and, still more, that there has been a perception of the underlying relation of conformity between them. In this larger sense there can be no knowledge without judgment. And here, in judgment, occurs the critical stage of knowledge, the point where the problem of the real, or of the connection between thought and being comes up. But is it not at the same time cleared up? *To isolate the judgment from its realist content seems impossible.* Such is the conclusion we shall be defending.

What we are saying is that in its reflection upon the relation between subject and object of knowledge the mind is naturally apprised of the realist character of its knowl-

edge. To suggest, then, that in the reflective phase of the act of knowledge the mind should still prescind from realism, this would be a purely factitious state of affairs. The natural mind does not have it so. The moment I reflect upon my thought I am one that judges. So that to know, for a human intelligence, is at the same time to judge; and to judge, as we shall have occasion to repeat, is to apprehend that which is—really is. Consequently, if critical philosophy (criteriology) is to start off with the fact of knowledge, it has also to start off with realism. In the main, then, Professor Gilson's position seems the right one. But much needs still to be said by way of clarifying the realism we propose.

Enough has already been said, however, to give a more complete answer to a question raised earlier: why and where to conduct the "critique" of knowledge, within or without the framework of metaphysics. Epistemologists with a "criticalist" leaning, such as alluded to some paragraphs back, were naturally led to separate the two disciplines. Criteriology became a sort of introduction to metaphysics, or at least an indispensable instrument of verification designed to authenticate its findings. Not that they denied all validity to a metaphysics based, as heretofore, on realism without benefit of prior critique; but to be thoroughly scientific we should begin, it was argued, by putting man's instruments of knowledge to the critical test, admitting no preconceptions for or against.

Our answer is this. There may, or may not, be some practical advantage—where (say) one's purpose is primarily apologetical—in assembling under one head those various matters which have to do with the validation of

knowledge or the various kinds of knowledge. But no or yes to that, we are absolutely convinced that to divorce the criteriological enterprise from the metaphysical one is open to grave objection; for it dissociates in an artificial and precarious manner, two functions of the mind which are intimately, in fact indivisibly conjoined in the fully developed act of knowledge, the judgment. Every judgment is by nature reflective or, if one prefers, "critical." And since metaphysics builds especially on judgments, and this in the authoritative manner that distinguishes it, to be reflective and critical is of the essence of this science. Fully aware of what he affirms, the metaphysician is also the one to know why he affirms it, and that it is true. Whether in the same instant the properly psychological appurtenances to his knowledge are also clear—that is immaterial. What is to the point for the metaphysician is what he finds as regards the object itself. Now, what he finds there is absolutely true; critique, preceding or concurrent, cannot change it one particle. Metaphysics itself, indeed philosophy as such, is reflective or critical; either that, or just a frolic of the mind. Which comes to saying, as we have said before, that for us there is but one sovereign wisdom of the natural order, namely metaphysics, itself the critique pre-eminent.

3. *Basic Reasons for the Attitude of Criticalists and Idealists*

Error, like infection, is never finally met and overcome until we have probed its seat and traced the hidden processes. Tendencies as strong as those which, from antiquity, have lured so many minds to skepticism, idealism, or criticalism cannot be without all foundation. What, then, lurks in these philosophies?

Certainty of human knowledge rests ultimately on sense perception. Both because of the nature of its object and the complexity of the sensory apparatus, this perception is attended by considerable obscurity, hence by no small susceptibility to error. This, in part, explains the doubts and misgivings which have led many to skepticism, all the more that they lacked that larger view of the matter which shows truth to be compossible with error. By an understandable reaction Plato and Descartes, among the more eminent, thought the mind could be reassured by placing the evidence for truth in an intelligible realm completely removed from the world of sense. By this stroke the obscurity that haunts the knowledge of this world of ours was supposedly overcome, or at least circumvented; for the clear and distinct idea which Descartes, for example, made so much of was apparently won.

But all was not gain, to say the least. Sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge, now sundered, stood as opposing realms, and bringing them together again would not be easy. Various forms of parallelism were proposed, facile solutions which shed little light on the integration of all the factors of human knowledge. Mostly, however, philosophers yielded to the temptation to ignore one side of knowledge in favor of the other. Some, that is, as the British Empiricists, tamely submitted to sensism; others, perhaps more numerous, discarded the sensible to espouse the pure idea, from which it was but a step to declare ideas the only true existents. Excessive dissociation of sensory knowledge from intellectual knowledge is, without a doubt, the first and most pregnant source of idealist philosophies.

If the dissociation is carried to the point where the mind becomes the determinative factor in the development of the

object, supplying instead of receiving its content, then the stage is set for constructionist idealism, as witness Kant. If on top of that comes the discernment—a correct one, besides—that the most perfect thought is that which has itself for its object, then a flight of the imagination, if bold enough, can quite persuade an idealist mind that his is this perfect thought, or at least a participation in it. Such is idealism's denouement; philosophy is confounded with God's own knowledge. Hegel, like Fichte and Schelling before him, are there to prove it.

In this entire movement there is a kind of logic which compels the successive developments. Underlying it all is, as remarked, this divorce of mind and material nature, of sensation and intellection against which Aristotle already protested most vigorously. Human knowledge, he insisted and must be joined in insisting, is in conformity with experience, is in consequence both sensory and intellective, indissolubly so. No realism is solidly grounded if not on this first fundamental.

III. CONCERNING THE AUTHENTIC FOUNDATION OF REALISM

In the preceding pages we have framed, as we see it, the starting point for a Thomist epistemology, and in framing it have, in principle, already decided the question of realism. For, as soon as by reflection one becomes aware of all that is conveyed in the act of knowledge, it is no longer possible to prescind from realism, as though its factuality were still problematical. Such is the position we have taken. We shall now examine it further with a view to clarifying the grounds on which we have rested it. Before that, how-

ever, we shall consider and pass upon certain attempts to justify the realism of knowledge on a criticalist basis.

1. *Regaining Reality via the* Cogito

Descartes proposes two ways of doing this. Some neo-Thomists, not too surprisingly perhaps, have also entertained them.

a) There is the way of *The Meditations,* where, toward the end, Descartes seeks to re-establish contact with the external world, from which he had cut himself off in the beginning.[17] Though (he argues) my clear and distinct ideas concerning the material world might possibly originate in myself, the same cannot be said of my sensations. These involve passivity, and this demands a proportionate active power from without. God, unless he be a deceiver, is not this power, for he gives me no reason to think it him and every reason to think it not. Consequently, the cause of my sensations must be traced to corporeal realities. In short, the external world must exist if there is to be a satisfactory explanation for the existence of sensations.

The argument carries an air of plausibility, and many adaptions of it have been formulated. But for all its plausibility, as a demonstration of the realism of our knowledge it will not do. To say that our sensations originate from an exterior causality is, of course, correct; but we definitely do not have to turn to this causality to become aware of the objectivity of sensation. Besides, this manner of approach gives a completely false twist to the mechanism of perception, for it implies that the sensory image is a purely

[17] *Meditations,* VI; for bibliographical details, see note 3 of present chapter.

subjective double of external reality and the direct object of perception, when as a matter of fact what is directly perceived, through the image, is external reality. Also, this recourse to the principle of causality is, from a criticalist standpoint, questionable; the principle, namely, is used before it has been justified. Evidently, this is not the way to external reality.

b) In the *Discourse on Method* Descartes reassures us of the realism of knowledge from another point of view, appealing to the certitude derived from perception of the self. For this, of course, there was the precedent of none other than St. Augustine. The existence of an external world (it is argued) is certified through indubitable recognition of the self, a recognition unique and immediate, a primary datum of reflective consciousness. In this apperceptive experience there is, apparently, neither distance nor obstacle between the subject that knows and the object that is known. For, not only are they on the same ontological plane; they are basically identical.

True enough; recognition of the self involves existence of the self or the thinking subject. But the argument proves little else, and even as far as it goes bears considerable qualification. Thus, it should be noted that the grasp of the self, however immediate and unimpeachable, is still a less perfect form of knowledge than what is derived through the medium of one's essence, *per essentiam,* the characteristic knowledge of pure spirits. Again, and most importantly, what our intellect in its present condition of union with the body grasps most immediately and directly, in short its proper object, is not some spiritual reality but the things of material nature. The basic experience, then, the one to

which the mind awakens first, is that the perceived, or more generally the things about me, simply *are*—whether they are me or something else is a subsequent discovery. Consequently, those who stand on apperception of the self stop short of the actual source of knowledge, and furthermore, invite the dissociation of sensible and intelligible which we found seminal to the whole idealist movement. Finally, from a more metaphysical standpoint, this caution: Do not rest the absolute validity of knowledge on any particular grasp of being but simply on the realist import of the transcendental notion of being. This, as we have learned, embraces implicitly all particular being and is not confined to any one form of it.

2. *The Elements of Judgment*

We proceed now to a more positive consideration of the nature of judgment. Our principal source will be the earlier-mentioned work of Roland-Gosselin,[18] who, in the formative part of his treatment, analyzes the act of knowledge with exceptional accuracy.

Our inquiry, at the moment, comes to this: what is knowledge, or what is it to know? We want the clearest possible answer to this question. There is just one way to get it, by examining with utmost attention the operations which the mind performs in the course of any act of knowledge. Not to protract the issue, we shall take it for

[18] Namely *Essai d'une étude critique de la connaissance;* for publisher, etc. see note 11 of present chapter.

A more recent and equally notable study of judgment is Hoenen, Peter H. J., *Reality and Judgment According to St. Thomas;* trans, from the French by Henry F. Tiblier (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952. Library of Living Catholic Thought).

granted that the perfective moment of knowledge, the one in which, in particular, the mind becomes distinctly aware of its knowledge is the judgment. From here on, accordingly, our inquiry into the nature of knowledge will be mostly an inquiry into the nature of judgment.

Any instance of judgment will do for analysis. Suppose, then, we say "this curtain is blue." What are the constitutive elements of this judgment? Perhaps the first thing to notice is that there has been some connection or association established. I had before my mind the two notions "this curtain" and the color "blue." In saying "this curtain is blue" I made a mental composition of the two notions; which is to say, I attributed "blue" to "curtain." A judgment, then, embodies a *relation of attribution* or *predication,* one thing said of another.

There is, however, yet another and in a sense a more basic relation involved. In making the judgment that the curtain is blue I also tell myself, mentally at least, that what I am saying (the attribution) is true. What is meant by "is true"? Simply that the attribution made in the judgment is in agreement with reality. I find my judgment true because I see that between what it says and what is, between my mind and reality, there exists a relation of agreement or conformity—*adaequatio rei et intellectus,* as the Scholastic idiom has it. Thus, in a judgment such as here analyzed there is a twofold relation expressed, one between subject and predicate, another (no less discerned) between *my thought* and *something that is,* which latter phrase is in a way the definition of being. The second relation, that of agreement between mind and reality, constitutes the truth of the judgment and is an essential element of it. That it is

essential is readily shown. For, suppose that I cancel the agreement by denying it, as in "no, this curtain is not really blue." In that case my first judgment is at once discredited as not in conformity with reality, or with what the curtain really is; and the relation that had been established between subject (curtain) and predicate (blue) is destroyed.

It would not be difficult to apply the foregoing analysis to any sort of judgment, though of course categorical judgments, in which the copula "is" is explicitly stated, lend themselves most readily to the purpose. But even where the copula is only implied, as in "the sun shines," the point at issue is evident enough. Here, as always, what my mind thinks is not true unless what it thinks refers to (in the sense of agrees with) reality, with what is. As for other judgments distinguished by logicians, whatever their form the same principle rules; affirmation or denial relates to reality. We may, then, conclude with Roland-Gosselin that "the analysis of judgment warrants the assertion that the object is not entirely determined by the subject, nor can it (the object) be affirmed by the subject unless it is thought in relation to what is. Failing this relation, a judgment is worthless." [19]

A further word should now be said on an aspect of the judicative process to which some reference has already been made, namely, the reason why the mind affirms (or denies) one thing of another. Why, as in our earlier example, do I say "this curtain is blue"? What moves me to the affirmation? The answer is all important. I pronounce the curtain blue because I see it is blue; I see it clearly. Not only, in other words, do I judge the curtain blue, but I judge that I

[19] *Op. cit.* (note 18), p. 45. Translation mine.—[Tr.]

see it so, that the thing is manifest to me. In judgment, accordingly, the mind is governed by some manifestation on the part of the object, but the manifestation or evidence need not be a matter of sense perception. Indeed not; for in judgments of the most abstract kind I also see that what I am saying is true, but I see it intellectually. Thus in "the whole is greater than the part" the manifestation of the truth is intellectual. The eye can see (say) a whole apple, or part of one, but the mind sees that universally the whole is greater than the part. Evidence—the clear visibility of something—is a constitutive element of every judgment.

Kantian philosophers would reduce the formation of judgment to an act of pure synthesis, as though it was in no way determined by the external object but originated solely from the constitutional habit of the mind. This, it will be remembered, harks back to the idealist thesis that the mind is pure activity. We can only repeat that the realist, without going to the idealist extreme, also acknowledges the active role of the mind in judgment as in other operations. The mind does indeed by its own activity attribute the predicate to the subject; however, the attribution is not made blindly but only because the mind sees itself determined to it by the object. The pure synthesis of Kant, on the other hand, is to all intents and purposes a judgment without insight, a blind judgment. Yet the realities of human psychology do not support Kant; there just is no way for the mind to lay hold of what it does not in some way see.

In sum, a judgment, as analysis shows, is constituted by a twofold relation; for it rests ultimately on the validity of the mind's grasp of being, as well as on evidence of judg-

ment's relation to being. "Every judgment," to call again on Roland-Gosselin, "presupposes that the activity of the subject [the mind] originates, at least in its logical aspect, with an evidence of being, and requires for its complete determination an evidence that the attribution, through which judgment is expressed, has relation to 'what is.' " [20]

3. *The Realist Import of Judgment*

Judgment, we have been saying, hinges on being. What is this being that controls the judgment and which, in turn, judgment expresses? Ruled out, in the light of earlier remarks, are idealist acceptations of it. So, the being to which judgment refers is not the more or less subjective being denoted by the copula. In "the curtain *is* blue" the reality which the mind has in view and by which it is measured does not lie in the "is" of the proposition. The being of the proposition as such is indeed posited by the mind; so much we may grant the idealist. But this is no more than the *ens verum,* the "being true" which both Aristotle and St. Thomas carefully distinguish from *ens simpliciter,* being in the absolute or objective sense. *Ens verum* ("the being of truth" as opposed to "the truth of being") refers only to the fact of conformity between the intellect and objective being. The latter (objective being) is precisely the being of which judgment is a function, so that the being which consists of the truth-relation (the aforesaid conformity) has no meaning except as it relates to objective being. It is utterly incorrect, then, to say in the idealist fashion that by my affirmation of being I myself have posited being, as though it were a form or determination emanating from my mind.

Nor must the being which measures my thought be re-

[20] *Op. cit.* p. 51. Translation mine.—[Tr.]

garded as a pure object whose whole and sole reality consisted in being thought by the mind. The object-relation—that a thing stands in the relation of object to a subject—this, it should be plain, is not what constitutes the thing in the first place, any more than being as known can stand without the being of which it is but a particular mode. The signification of being transcends the signification of object; which is to say that being as such is prior to object as such. In the most formal sense, therefore, being is not what is known, or what is an object of knowledge.21

The being of which we now speak is the being which in an earlier context we defined as "that which is," a composite in which we distinguished the aspect "something" (the *essence')* and the aspect "which is" (its *existence,* or its ordering to existence). The latter aspect, moreover, was identified as the ultimate determinant or actuality of being. What we said of being is to be said of the real. The real is precisely that which exists or which stands in (actual or possible) relation to existence. Hence, it is all the same whether we say that knowledge relates to *what is,* or refers to the *real,* or has *realist value.* This seems simple enough; it

21 It would, of course, be a gross misreading of the author to go from "being is not what is known" to tire completely erroneous conversion "what is known is not being." The qualifying words *in the most formal sense* are therefore all-important. To say that being in the formal sense is not what is known is simply to say that "to be known" is not the definition of being; else, things would not exist unless or except when they are known, and to know them w'ould be equivalent to causing or creating them—a state of affairs which, with some elucidations, is true of the divine mind alone. Hence the author's charge in the fore part of the chapter that absolute idealists, who claim the mind creates its object, arrogate to themselves the mode of knowledge prerogative of the Deity.—[Tr.]

is also decisive. To have understood it is to have found, as by a single stroke, the key to the riddle of realism in knowledge. Because in judging I take my measure from *what is,* my knowledge has by nature a realist import. So, once for all, to know (sc. as in judgment) is to perceive *what is.*

Before leaving this discussion one further point concerning the real should be made. The real to which judgments refer and which they affirm is not all of the same generality but differs with the modes and the orders of knowledge. If I say "man is a biped," I make a universal affirmation of whose objective validity there can be no doubt, but the object affirmed (a universal nature) does not exist in the manner of this (individual) table on which I write and whose existence I also affirm. Likewise, "the end of the world" is thought of as something, though its realization lies in the future. In these and like instances my judgment does indeed refer to existent being as such, but according to modes of realization which are not all alike. Thought, in its realism, respects and reflects the mode of reality proper to each different object of thought. In sum, knowledge takes many forms, and its realism varies accordingly. To appraise the realism of its different forms, however, presupposes a more detailed study than is here feasible.

Conclusion. Though of necessity far from exhaustive, the foregoing analysis will have been adequate if, as we trust, it has demonstrated the foundation on which the realism of knowledge must stand. Some—improperly, we believe—have tried to find this foundation in the circumstances of sensation (which presumably needs an external cause), or in the perception of self (which includes the body, an external reality for the mind), or in the self-recognition of the

spiritual subject (I think, therefore I am)—ways, all of these, more or less futile. The basic assurance of realism lies in none of them but solely in being, and this as discovered to the mind by its reflection in judgment. This is the sum and substance of what we have set forth.

A fuller treatment of the foundation of realism would take account of more concrete considerations as well, such as the demands of practical reason, the convictions of mankind, the assumptions on which men conduct human affairs, etc. Doubtless, there is something to be said for arguments woven around these elements of human experience, since practical life does indeed presuppose and point to the truth of realism. But they could never be a substitute for the direct evidence supplied in judgment, where, by reflection, the mind is granted an immediate awareness of the realism of its speculative knowledge. This is the knowledge (rather than that of the practical order) through which the fundamental conformity of thought with being is most verily apprehended. Thus, whether in metaphysics proper or in the theory of knowledge, the starting point is not in the order of action but in the reflective grasp of being, a grasp that occurs in judgment.

IV. FIRST PRINCIPLES

a) To the study of being as being Aristotle joins the study of certain primary truths which he names 'axioms.' [22] The reason is clearly stated; these truths, he says, should be studied in the science of being because they have the same amplitude or universality as being. "Since," in his own words, "it is evident that the axioms hold good for all beings

22 Cf. *Metaph.* r, j.

as beings ... he who studies being as being should also take account of them." [23]

In line with this recommendation of Aristotle's, many metaphysical authors in his tradition take up first principles immediately after their treatment of being as such. Others, it is true, consign this topic to logic, pleading that these principles are the basic laws which govern every exercise of reason. That they do so govern is unquestionable; yet prior to their directive function over the mind is their operation as objective laws of being, and it is in the latter capacity that they are first as well as immediately made known to us. Hence, to couple the consideration of these primary truths with the study of being as being is, as Aristotle plainly shows, the proper course of inquiry. The consideration, moreover, which is calculated to assure the mind of all first truths, falls naturally within the scheme of the present chapter, that is, within the context of the critical study of being and of the first foundations of our knowledge. Yes, in the matter of first principles metaphysics and critique (criteriology) are practically equivalent.

b) To start off, we should be clear as to the meaning of *first principle.* Generally speaking first principles, as the name implies, are something primary or ultimate. Working backward (Scholastically: "in the ascending order"), they represent the final or ultimate link in the chain of knowledge, the last limit beyond which the resolution of knowledge cannot go. As a rule the expression "first principles" refers to judgments or propositions, but St. Thomas also applies it to the terms or concepts, the elements as it were, of a proposition. We shall restrict our inquiry to the first

[23] *Loc. cit.* 1005 a 27-29.

meaning, to principles in the form of propositions. Also, it should be obvious that in the study of being and its first principles we have not to concern ourselves with principles that are special to any science but only with those that pertain to all being and so are absolutely common—common to each and every science.

Considered in themselves first principles must be not only *true* and *necessary,* as a matter of course, but also *immediate* (Scholastically: *per se nota).* Immediacy, as applied to a principle, means that the truth of it is understood without the help of intermediate notions or middle terms. We have only to grasp the meaning of the terms that make up the principle, and the truth of the proposition becomes instantly evident. In this sense first principles are said to be self-evident or *known through themselves,* the literal rendering of *per se nota.* When, moreover, a principle is absolutely first, the terms it comprises must also be absolutely first or simple, hence incapable of reduction to prior notions. If they could be reduced, they would not be first. Every science has its principles, which may not be absolutely first. Even then, however, the principles, as the name indicates, are basic points of reference for the science; the science rests on them and every development necessarily implies and presupposes them. As for the metaphysical principles relating to being, these are first to all others, so that all knowledge of whatever order is subordinate to them. Hence the capital importance of these first or primary truths.

c) Which among the metaphysical principles just referred to comes before all others? Thomists today do not agree. For Aristotle, on the other hand, the question was

settled.[24] This principle, he argued, would have to meet three conditions; it must be i)the best known, z)the first known, and ?)the most certain, "about which it is impossible to be mistaken." Which is this principle? For Aristotle it is unequivocally the principle of noncontradiction—or, elliptically, "of contradiction." [25]

i. *The Principle of Noncontradiction*

a) The formulation of the principle varies. Aristotle proposes, without preliminaries, the following: "it is impossible that the same attribute belong and at the same time not belong to the same subject in the same respect." St. Thomas' rendition of this is:

> *impossibile est eidem simul inesse et non inesse idem secundum idem,*

which in English comes to: "it is impossible to affirm and to deny the same thing at the same time in the same respect."

So formulated, the immediate reference of the principle of noncontradiction is to operations of the mind, to attribution and nonattribution (i.e. affirmation and negation), which are declared mutually exclusive under the conditions of the principle. A more metaphysically-oriented formulation can be made, seeing that in any judgment—we are dealing with principles that are judgments—the mind is determined by the reality which serves as its object. For example, I judge that the sky is blue because I see that it is actually blue. Consequently, it is more conformable even

24 Cf. *Metaph.* r, j, 1005 b 5 ff.

25 Cf. Text IV, "Concerning the First Principle of Demonstration," p. 252.

to the structure of knowledge to word the principle with a view to its objective content, in which case it will read "being is not nonbeing," or, same sense, "what is, is not what is not." So, to follow our usual practice, we have in Latin:

ens non est non ens.

In metaphysics, evidently, where our standpoint is that of objective being, the preferred formulation should be the objective one, "being is not nonbeing" or its aforementioned variant.

b) Next, we examine the steps by which the mind becomes cognizant of the principle. Plainly, the principle results from comparing and contrasting two notions, "being" and "nonbeing." The being here in question is none other than that first datum of the intellect of which we spoke in the preceding chapter. As for the notion of nonbeing, the mind sees at once that its positive content is again the notion of being, from which it but differs by the negation it bears, solely an act of the mind. This response of the mind to the conception of being, the negation of it, is absolutely primary, a comportment so basic and instinctive to the mind that there is no way of defining it except through itself. The mind, accordingly, first apprehends (and conceives) being; then it denies (or conceives the negation of) being; and thus it has the notion, or the pseudo-notion, of nonbeing.

Comparing the notions of being and nonbeing, we see and cannot fail to see that they are irreducible to each other. The recognition of their incompatibility is immediate and necessary, a primordial datum of the mind.

Being, as being, can never be nonbeing. In consequence of this opposition, which is absolute and irresoluble, it is impossible—and this was our first formulation of the principle—to both affirm and deny the same thing at the same time and in the same respect. Such simultaneous affirmation and denial would in effect identify being with nonbeing, and this the mind is utterly incapable of doing—the mind, I say, because the speech of man can say even what the mind cannot. All told, then, in the discovery of the principle of noncontradiction the mind employs but one positive notion, that of being, upon the conception of which it posits two successive acts of negation, negation of being and of compatibility between being and nonbeing. This done, it only remains to give verbal expression to the objective incompatibility thus discovered.

c) Having seen how the mind arrives at the principle of noncontradiction, we come to the question of its validity, or the grounds for asserting its validity. That the principle is an absolute, objective truth is immediately or self-evident; as soon as the mind grasps the notion of being and nonbeing it necessarily recognizes their mutual exclusivity as well as the absolute character of the exclusion; and this, in essence, is the principle. But is there another way, or rather *a* way—since what is self-evident is not proved—to justify and certify the principle? A direct demonstration is obviously out of the question, for this would needs be based on the apprehension of a prior truth, the impossibility of which is clear from the fact that nothing is prior to being. But what of an indirect demonstration, the refutation by absurdity? In general, refutation by absurdity consists in showing that a certain proposition necessarily involves the

holder in contradiction; he is saying what he is not saying, or not saying what he is saying. In the present instance such a maneuver would be beside the point, since the possibility of contradiction—the possibility of contradicting the principle—is precisely what its adversary maintains. (Note again that what is at stake is not the possibility of mouthing a contradiction but the possibility of thinking it, or thinking it true.)

In our case, then, the adversary, if he is to be met on his own grounds, is not trapped by confronting him with his contradiction of himself but by reducing him to silence. To affirm the identity of contradictories, in other words, is no longer to have a distinct object of thought; it is to have no thought at all. Thus, if the adversary concedes that he has some definite thing in mind and thereby attaches some meaning to the word that expresses his thought, he automatically acknowledges that being is not contradictory; he either has an object of thought or not, either means something or does not. If, in spite of this, he sticks to his oral denial of the principle, the denial is a mere trick of words, deprived of anything distinguishable as an object of thought. The alternatives here are to think of something or not to think at all; there is no other possibility. In sum, if you wish to think you must fix on some determined object; you must, that is, acknowledge the dictates of being.

d) A final word pertains to the extent of the principle's applicability. Since it originates from the notion of being, the principle, taken in itself and unrestrictedly, holds good for all modes of being, which is simply to say for all being; and, correlatively, it holds good for all thought relating to being, which is again to say for all thought, as this always

relates to being of some kind. However, the beings of our experience, because they are many and variable, are none of them endowed with the fullness of being. While in some respects they are indeed being, in other respects they are nonbeing—there is being which is not their being. Consequently, the principle of noncontradiction applies to such beings but from certain points of view and within certain limits; what it says in effect is that so far as they are being, they are not nonbeing. Only for absolute being, which is God, does the principle hold in absolute manner.

2. *The Principle of Identity*

Modern philosophers, Scholastics included, speak of yet another, an affirmative principle which is thought to go with the principle of noncontradiction and by some is even placed ahead of it. This is the principle of identity, by which being is predicated of itself.

a) St. Thomas, for his part, makes no mention of this principle, at least not in so many words. When, in logic or in metaphysics, he treats of the axioms, the primary truths, nothing is ever said about this one. Nevertheless, something akin to the principle, or even its equivalent, can be traced in his thought. For one thing, St. Thomas does speak of identity and tells us very exactly what he means by it, namely, the mode of unity proper to substance. Hence, to affirm the identity of being would, in a way, be the same as to assert its unity. Thus understood, the principle of identity would but come to another expression for what might be called the principle of unity of being: that every being is one, or identical with itself. Of this, of course, there can be no doubt. That every being is one or identical with itself is

a very true proposition, and a very accurate one at that—known, moreover, with all the immediacy of a first principle. However, in introducing the notion of the transcendental one, the proposition goes beyond the mere notion of being, and this, it is agreed, the principle of identity must not do. Consequently, if the principle is to have a formal basis in St. Thomas, recourse must be had to some other doctrinal context, which, we believe, is provided in the following passage:

> One cannot find anything that is predicated affirmatively and absolutely of every being except its essence, according to which it is said to be, and is given the name "thing" (res). For, as Avicenna explains *[Metaph.1,6],* "thing" differs from "being" (ens) in this, that being is named after the act of existing *[ab actu essendi],* whereas thing expresses the quiddity or essence of the being.[26]

In the distinction made in this text we find the clue to the principle of identity, such as accords with the thought of St. Thomas.

b) It is at once clear that unless the predicate differs somehow from the subject, there can be no judgment in the true sense of the word. A strictly tautological predication of being (where "being" is used twice with the identical meaning) constitutes no judgment at all. Thus, "being is being" tells us nothing unless the second "being" enlarges, however modestly, upon the first. And here enters a problem. Being, it is obvious, must be the subject of any statement of the principle of identity; yet being signifies everything. Where, then, find a predicate that will add anything to the

26 *De Verit.* q. i, a. i c.

signification of the subject? St. Thomas, as we have said, points the way in the above citation, making within being itself the distinction, now familiar, of being as existent and being as essence. The principle, accordingly, comes to "being (as existent) is being (as essence)."

Authors are agreed that this is the general sense of the principle, even though in their explication of it some differences appear. If the principle is thought to accentuate the distinction between essence or thing (res) and the act of existing, then the reading of it might well be, as Garrigou-Lagrange proposes, "every being is something determinate, something of a determinate nature which constitutes it in its proper self." [27] In short, every being has a certain nature. On the other hand, it would seem preferable to keep the formulation of the principle more strictly within the limits of the notion "what exists" (ens), namely, by considering essence not as a certain essence but as the essence of being itself. Thus, instead of, Is being something determinate? the question would be, What thing, what nature is being? and the reply (the principle), It is being. In other words, "every being is what it is," as Maritain phrases it;[28] or simply, "being is being"—*ens est ens*—, which says in effect

27 Garrigou-Legrange, R., O.P., *Le sens commun,* jme éd. (Paris: Bcauchesne, 1922), p. 166; which, in the original reads: "Tout être est quelque chose de déterminé, d'une nature déterminée qui le constitue en propre."

See also *(idem), God: His Existence and His Nature,* I, 159-163; for publisher, etc. see note 15, chapter 2, p. 49.

28 Cf. Maritain, Jacques, A *Preface to Metaphysics,* pp. 92-93 (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1941). Available in paperback, Mentor Omega Book (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1962).

"being has for nature to be." These latter formulas win our acceptance, for the reason that they keep closer to the mind's original discovery of being—closer than formulations which, like that of Père Garrigou-Lagrange, single out the determination being receives from essence (res).

c) Concerning some other aspects of the principle, we have only to repeat what was said apropos of the principle of noncontradiction. In both, the mind, affirming or denying, expresses itself as it does only because it sees the objective agreement or nonagreement, as the case may be, between the two terms involved, between subject and predicate. Furthermore, like the principle of noncontradiction, that of identity is coextensive with being; it holds for all being. Again, however, it holds proportionately: for limited or imperfect beings, only so far as they *are* (in some respects, it will be recalled, they *are not).* To God, on the other hand, and only to him it applies simply; for, as he alone is being absolutely, so he alone is being identically.

d) There remains one question. To which principle should the primacy go, to identity or noncontradiction? Objectively speaking, or from the view of notional content, both presuppose but one (and that the same) datum, namely being; and both terminate in the same object, again being. Each of them, moreover, is immediate or self-evident; nor is the truth of one subordinate to the truth of the other. On the subjective side (the side of mental activity), a difference is more easily found: two acts of negation in the one (noncontradiction); discrimination of essence and existence and an act of affirmation in the other (identity). From this point of view it is perhaps possible to speak of (psychological or logical) priority. In metaphysics, however, since

neither principle goes beyond the explicit content of the notion of being, the question of priority has not to be raised.

3. *Other Principles*

Together with the principle of noncontradiction Aristotle discusses an immediate consequence of it, "that between the affirmation and negation of being no middle ground is possible; that being is or is not." This is commonly known as the law of excluded middle, and the mention of it shall suffice. Modern authors include for discussion at this point a number of other principles: principle of sufficient reason, of causality, of finality, of substance. These principles are certainly essential to the mind in its manifold work of inquiry; but, considering that they deal with notions and distinctions which, in regular procedure, have not been met with at this stage of metaphysical study, it is more logical to speak of them later. We shall keep to this more methodical course and in the next chapter go at once to the properties of being, that is, the properties other than being itself considered as "quiddity" and in its opposition to nonbeing.

Concluding note: On the origin and formation of first principles. These principles are not innate; they are not known prior to all experience. What is innate is the power to know them, the intellect, which at first has no actual knowledge whatever, though it is in potency, pure potency, to every intelligible. Knowledge of first principles, specifically of the ones studied above, is acquired in the same way as other knowledge, through the senses. From the presentations of sense the intellect abstracts the notion of being;

once this notion is formed the principles are formed, immediately. Our first recognition of them, however, comes from particular cases, from this or that being; not until being is grasped in its universality are the principles formulated in their universality.

While not innate, first principles are nevertheless said to be *natural* to our intellect, in the sense that they are a necessary, never-failing consequent of its operation; thus, if the intellect acts at all, it cannot but be in possession of them. In the human intellect, moreover, they serve as a kind of habit *(habitus')*, a stable disposition which enables a faculty to function more readily and more dependably. This habit, furthermore, is twofold, according as the principles pertain to the speculative order or to practical action. In metaphysics, keep in mind, we are concerned with first principles of the speculative order; not innate, they nevertheless perfect the intellect *naturally* rather than by deliberate cultivation.[29]

29 Cf. *In IV Metaph.* lect. 6, no. 599.

t CHAPTER 4

The Transcendental

I. THE TRANSCENDENTALS IN GENERAL

t IN the chapter on being[1] we saw that the metaphysical notion of being, which is an analogous concept, embraces all reality in a proportional unity. We found, moreover, that the notion is a complex one, adverting in particular to the distinct aspects of essence and existence. We have now to consider some other aspects of being, its properties (as they are called), for the study of being as being should include whatever is inseparable from and convertible with being. This, of course, should logically be done before treating of the categories, particular modes of being.

Parenthetically, this further determination of being—finding its properties, the aspects or elements common to being as being—is not to be done in the manner of some idealists, by a dialectic of pure deduction; for from the mere notion of being we get—the mere notion of being. The properties of being are based in reality and must be sought there; indeed they are given, at least in principle, when being is given, in the mind's first apprehension. The ques-

1 Namely chapter 2.

tion, then, is not one of drawing something from an abstraction, that is, from the abstract notion of being but rather from the reality of being, the same being which the mind first experiences. By redirecting its attention to the content of this experience the mind becomes explicitly aware of the properties of being and thus acquires a more integral conception of the reality which constitutes its initial datum.

Granted the necessity of recourse to experience for progress in metaphysical thought, we have still to determine how "anything" can be added to being. St. Thomas, in a classic passage, explains the point perfectly.[2] Being, he says, cannot be diversified in the manner of a genus, by differences that would not be contained in being itself—a specific difference is not actually contained in a genus.[3] Being can only be differentiated through modes which are intrinsic to being itself. Basically, there are but two ways for this differentiation to occur. Either the modes in question are particular modes, constituting the so-called predicaments of being; or they are modes which pertain to being universally and necessarily, to every being without exception. In St. Thomas' words,

> nothing can be added to being as though it were something not included in being—in the way that a difference is added to a genus or an accident to a subject—for every reality is essentially a being. Tire Philosopher has shown this by proving that being cannot be a genus *[Metaph.B,$,* 993 b 23]. Yet, in this sense some predicates may be said to add to being, namely, inasmuch as they express a mode of being not expressed by the term *being.* This happens in two ways. First, the mode expressed is

2 Cf. *De Verit.* q. 1, a. 1 c.

3 Reference to this point was made earlier. Cf. chapter 2, p. 45 f.

some particular manner of being; for there are different grades of being, according to which we speak of different modes of existence; and conformably to these modes the different genera of things are drawn up. . . . Second, something is said to add to being because the mode it expresses is one that is common and consequent upon every being. . . .[4]

These modes, "consequent upon every being," constitute, in the accepted parlance, the *transcendental properties of being;* of which severally in the course of the chapter. For the present, note that they are not "properties" in the strict sense, for then they would express something that is extrinsic to the nature of being, a manifest impossibility. They are therefore properties in a larger sense, as inseparable from being and designating it under another aspect. As for "transcendental," this they are in the same sense as being: that which occurs in all being, and so transcends any particular category of it. And because they are as universal as being itself, the transcendental modes are spoken of as *convertible -with being,* so that in a proposition where being is the subject and one of the common modes the predicate (or vice versa), we may interchange them. If, for example, "being is one," then "the one is being," with no shift of meaning.

1. *Derivation of the Transcendentals*

As found in manuals of philosophy, the theory of transcendentals—*being, one, true, good*—seems a rather simple, quickly-ordered affair; such, in its finished form, it may well be. Historically, however, the course of development was

4 *De Verit.* q. 1, a. 1; trans, by Robert W. Mulligan, S.J., *Truth,* Vol. I (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952).

not quick and easy. Progress came gradually, with ensuing complexity; and when the doctrine had achieved maturity, it was the work not of one but of many, successive contributors.

Aristotle states very clearly what is required for a notion to be transcendental, at least so far as it applies to the *one,* whose thorough identity and convertibility with being he noted to perfection.[5] By contrast, Aristotle does not treat of the *good* in the same metaphysical way, under the aspect of a universal property, so as to show its identity with being. For him the good, to be sure, is everywhere the principle of action, but its assimilation to the order of being never quite materializes. Much the same goes for the *true,* and for being as true; these are dealt with only in their subjective side, as pertaining to the terminal or perfective phase of the act of knowledge. In this sense the true, as we saw in the preceding chapter, is a property of judgment rather than of being; which explains why the true does not enter Aristotle's philosophy of being, or enters it only to be dismissed.

Actually, the formation of what was to become the standard triad of transcendentals relative to being—the one, the true, the good—was the work of Christian philosophy, in which, moreover, the first conceptions of the triad were mostly theologically inspired. One, true, and good were thought of as attributes of the primary Being, and were referred to each of the three Persons of the Trinity. But in creatures, too, signs or vestiges of these divine attributes were sought. From the beginning of the thirteenth century any number of Summas appeared, as well as Commentaries

6 Cf. *Metaph.* **r,** 2.

on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which testify to this first and largely theological development of the doctrine of transcendentals. Its philosophical elaboration, on the other hand, appears to have been the special contribution of St. Thomas, from whom the doctrine does indeed emerge in definitive form. We have already made reference to his article that is basic to the subject;[8] we proceed now to examine it more closely.

Since being is what the intellect first conceives of anything, all other conceptions must be formed by some addition to this fundamental notion. We have seen, however, that addition to being cannot be made as though to a genus, but rather by expressing various modes not explicitly signified in the mere notion of being. If the modes are particular, they represent predicaments; if universal, they express transcendental being and hence are named "transcendentals."

But on what basis are the universal modes themselves distinguished? First, according as they pertain to being taken absolutely (in itself), or relatively (to another being). In the first case, that of being in itself, the mode expresses something of being either affirmatively or negatively, and these alternatives give rise to two of the transcendental notions. Affirmatively, the only possible attribution to every being is that of its essence, to which corresponds the term "thing" (res). Negatively, there is also a single predication of being, its undividedness, signified in the term "one" (unum). "Thing" and "one," accordingly, are the two transcendentals which pertain to being absolutely.

On the other hand, being may also be considered relatively, or under the relation of one being to another, which

8 Namely De Verit. q. 1. a. 1.

may be a relation of distinction or one of conformity. Being, conceived of as distinct from others, is named *aliquid,* "something," as though to say "some other thing." It is easy to see that every being is distinct from every other being, but how can every being be conformed or assimilated to some other being? This is possible only if there is a being to which every other being is somehow accommodated. Such is the human soul, which by its powers of knowledge and appetition enjoys this amplitude. The accommodation or correspondence of being to the powers of knowledge is expressed by the term "true" (verum); whereas the accommodation to the powers of appetition is expressed by the "good" *(bonum).* In short, then, three things may be said of every being taken relatively: true, good, and otherness (some other thing). With that, all the transcendentals are accounted for. On this capital point, however, we ought to hear St. Thomas again, this time in full:

This mode [common and consequent upon every being] can be taken in two ways: first, as following upon every being considered absolutely; second, as following upon every being considered in relation to another. In the first, the term is used in two ways, because it expresses something in the being either affirmatively or negatively. However, one cannot find anything that is predicated affirmatively and absolutely of every being except its essence, according to which it is said to be, and is given the name "thing" (res). For, as Avicenna explains *[Metaph.1,6],* "thing" differs from "being" (ens) in this, that being is named after the act of existing *[ab actu essendi],* whereas thing expresses the quiddity or the essence of the being. As for the negation consequent upon every being considered absolutely, this is its undividedness, which is expressed by *one;* for the *one* is simply undivided being.

If the mode of being is taken in the second way—according to the relation of one being to another—we find a twofold use. The first is based on the distinction of one being from another, and this distinctness is expressed by the word *something (aliquid),* which implies, as it were, *some other thing.* For, just as being is said to be *one* in so far as it is without division in itself, so it is said to be *something* in so far as it is divided from others. The second division is based on the correspondence one being has with another. This is possible only if there is something which is such that it agrees with every being. Such a being is the soul, which "in some way is all things," as is said in the treatise On *the Soul* [III,8, 431 b 21]. The soul, however, has both knowing and appetitive powers. *Good* expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power. . . . *True* expresses the correspondence of being to the knowing power... ,7

As readily seen, St. Thomas in this passage lists, besides being itself, five transcendental notions: thing, one, something, true, good—*res, unum, aliquid, verum, bonum.* The term "thing," however, does not, it seems, say anything that is not explicitly said by the notion of being, for it does no more than express the aspect of essence in things; some authors, as a matter of fact, do not consider it a transcendental property in the truest sense. As for "something," it can be interpreted two ways. Either it denotes the opposition or distinction of one being to another, and then it may be regarded as a consequence of the unity of being; or it marks the opposition of being to nonbeing—namely, that being is something other than nonbeing—, in which case it expresses an original and primary aspect of being. Yet granted the authenticity of "thing" and "something" as transcendental properties of being, it is doubtful that they

7 *De 'Verit.* q. 1. a. 1 c; for translation, etc. see note 4.

command the same philosophical interest as does the triad of the one, the true, the good, deservedly recognized as the classical three. To them, modern authors like to add the "beautiful" *(pulchrum),* which does indeed appear to be an aspect of all being. But though it denotes the agreement of being with the soul, it does so through the conjoint powers of knowledge and appetition; hence, instead of a primary transcendental it is more properly deemed a derivative one.

2. *Nature of the Transcendentals*

Whether it is the one he is speaking of,[8] the true,[9] or the good,[10] St. Thomas is always concerned to point out the basic identity between being and the transcendentals. Being and one, for example, do not signify different entities or natures, but the same nature: *unum autem et ens non diversas naturas sed unam significant.* The transcendentals, in short, do not constitute separate realities; it is the one reality which they express, namely being. Nevertheless, while really *(in re)* identical with being, the transcendentals are not conceptually identical with it. After all, "to be one" or "to be good" are not simple tautologies; in both something is added to "to be," something said which is not said by "to be" alone. There is, then, some ground of distinction between being and the transcendentals; but since the difference is obviously not in reality, it can only be in the mind, a distinction of reason. In the case of transcendental one the distinction (or addition) consists, as we shall see, of a negation, whereas in the true and the good it is a relation. St. Thomas makes this point when he writes:

8 Cf. *In* IV *Metaph.* lect. 2.
9 Cf. *De Verit,* q. 1, a. 1, *passim.*
10 Cf. *De Verit.* q. 21, a. 1.

To being, the first conception of the intellect, *one* adds what is merely conceptual *[rationis tantum]*—a negation; for, one means undivided being. But *true* and *good,* which are predicated positively, cannot add anything except a relation which is merely conceptual.[11]

a) The distinction in question must, however, be further defined. A distinction is real when it exists independently of the mind, when it pertains to elements of reality of which one is not actually the other(s). A distinction *of reason,* on the other hand, also called *logical,* exists only in the mind, i.e. only as product of a mental activity. It occurs, therefore, when the mind forms different concepts of what in itself is simply one. But a distinction of reason may have a foundation in reality; in which case it is said to be a *virtual* distinction (Scholastically: *rationis ratiocinatae'*). If it lacks this foundation it is a construct of the mind pure and simple, a *purely* logical or *verbal* distinction *(rationis ratiocinantis).* The distinction of the transcendentals from being, while not real, has a foundation in reality; it is therefore virtual.

However, the virtual distinction itself admits of discrimination. For, the concepts distinguished may be such that one contains the other(s) only potentially (as genus the species), which makes for a *major* virtual distinction. Or, one concept contains the other(s) actually but not explicitly (as analogue the analogated perfections, and being the transcendental properties), in which circumstances we have to do with a *minor* virtual distinction—the answer to the question in point, the nature of the distinction between being and its transcendental properties.

[11] *Ibid.* q. 21, a. 1 c.

b) A further clarification concerns specifically the transcendental true and good, lest they be confused with the relations which go with them. Though necessarily implied in each, the relation is not the transcendental. Basically, the true and the good designate being so far as it has reference respectively to the cognitive and the appetitive powers, which means so far as it is determined by the relation to these powers. Thus, what is signified by the transcendental true and good is the reality of being itself, but signified as grounding the order of knowledge and of appetition.

II. THE TRANSCENDENTALS IN PARTICULAR

1. *The One*

a) *Formation of the theory.* The metaphysics of the one has a twofold source. The first is Parmenides, with his keen sense for the unity of being. Being is, and it is one, so much so that it admits of no change and no diversity: thus the Parmenidean idea of it. The other source is the Pythagorean philosophy, specifically its speculations on the role of number in the constitution of material realities. Most important were its views on the role of the numerical unit, principle of number. Plato draws on both traditions, which also provide the setting for Aristotle's theory of transcendental one.

In elaborating his theory Aristotle was above all intent on securing the distinction between numerical and transcendental unity, a distinction which, though more or less inherited, he nevertheless saw the necessity of establishing more firmly. In addition, he was at pains to show that transcendental one is reducible to being, of which, however, he clearly saw it was but a property in the sense spoken of above, and not the essence (as the Pythagoreans had it).

Thus, where the Platonico-Pythagorean school clung to the idea that number is the essence of things, and plied their minds (and imaginations) in support of it, Aristotle's more perceptive view found being prior to one, a priority he labored successfully to bring home and which, in effect, left the whole number-essence idea shorn of foundation.

St. Thomas, in a quite deliberate manner, also begins by exposing the confusion of numerical and transcendental unity. Addressing himself to the point he says, among other things:

> Some philosophers failed to distinguish between unity which is convertible with being, and unity which is the principle of number, and thought that in neither sense does unity add anything to substance, and that in either sense it denotes the substance of a thing. From this it followed that number which is composed of units is the substance of all things: this was the opinion of Pythagoras and Plato.
>
> Others who failed to distinguish between unity that is convertible with being and unity that is the principle of number held the contrary opinion, namely that in either sense unity adds a certain accidental being to substance, and that in consequence all number is an accident pertaining to the genus of quantity. This was the opinion of Avicenna, and apparently all the teachers of old followed him; for they did not understand by one and many anything else but something pertaining to discrete quantity. . . . The above opinions, then, were based on the supposition that the *one* which is convertible with *being* is the same with that which is the principle of number, and that there is no plurality but number that is a species of quantity. Now this is clearly false.[12]

[12] De *Potentia,* q. 9, a. 7; trans, by Laurence Shapcote, O.P., *On the Power of God* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1952).

The confusion and the consequent error of which St. Thomas here speaks, stem from the failure to grasp the true nature of metaphysical unity, which consists in the absence of division, as well as from not having seen that there is a division which transcends the order of quantity; to this division, then, is opposed a unity which likewise transcends that order.[13]

b) *Transcendental unity.* For Aristotle and St. Thomas transcendental unity denotes the nondivision of being, in other words, the negation of its division. The steps by which the mind comes to the notion of this unity are outlined by St. Thomas as follows:

> First understood is being, and then nonbeing, and then division, and then the kind of unity which is the privation of division, and then plurality, whose concept includes the notion of division, just as the concept of unity includes the notion of nondivision.[14]

As this passage indicates, the concept of "one" designates none other than being, conceived however as undivided, *ens indivisum.* And how is the mind led to conceive of being as undivided? Through its activity of negation, which in this case is twofold: negation of being (nonbeing) and negation of division (one). Thus, what one adds to being is but a thing of reason, moreover a purely negative thing, a privation; yet not a privation in the strict sense, which refers to the absence of a property or quality that the subject ought to have—as the absence of sight in the case of blindness. The absence of division in being is obviously not of this

13 Cf. Text III, "Tire Study of the One Pertains to Metaphysics," p. 249; Text IX, "One As Principle of Number and One As Transcendental," p. 270.

14 In IV *Metaph.* lect. 3, no. 566.

kind; indeed, it were an absurdity to say that being ought to have the division which its unity prevents it from having. If one, then, adds nothing real to being, it follows that they are really identical, hence also logically convertible. This does not mean, however, that the two concepts (of being and of one) are the same, but that the reality to which they point is the same.

c) *Modes of unity.* Needless to say, the concept of one must be, as is that of being, analogous. Since, moreover, its analogy necessarily parallels that of being, there will be as many modes of unity as there are of being. St. Thomas, even as Aristotle before him, made a noticeable effort to reduce the complexity of them to some order.[15] His first distinction is that of essential and accidental unity—*tinum per se, unum per accidens.* Though five modes of per se unity are advanced, primarily this unity refers to that of substantial or essential being, as opposed to accidental—a man is one in substance, though many in accident.[16] Accidental unity results from the union of accidents, or of accident with substance: musician-mathematician-man constitutes an accidental unity.

Essential unity, moreover, may be real or logical. If real, it follows the distinction of the predicaments, where we note in particular the following: unity of substance (identity), unity of quantity (equality), unity of quality (similarity or likeness).

d) *Measure: property of the unit.*[17] Transcendentally speaking, unity is always defined by the absence of division;

15 Cf. especially *In* V *Metaph.* lectt. 7-8; *In X Metaph.* lect. 1.

16 Of course, an accident has essence too, hence per se unity. ~[Tr.]

17 Cf. *In* V *Metaph.* lect. 8; In X *Metaph.* lect. 2.

this is its essential or most formal nature. The same is true of the numerical unit, a mode of unity pertaining to the predicament of quantity; it, too, is most properly defined by its undividedness. However, with respect to number, which proceeds from it, the numerical unit has this special property, that it is the *measure of number,* measure being taken for what makes a thing known. How, for example, do I know how much a certain number is, say the number ten? Only by comparing it (measuring it) against the unit. That is why I say it numbers ten, meaning ten units. Thus, the number 10 is not understood without reference to the unit that measures it. Nevertheless, the most proper constitutive of the numerical unit is not that it measures number but that, like everything one, it is undivided. The absence of division, that, as we have said, is the first essential of whatever unity.

Furthermore, the property of measure, though primarily vested in the numerical unit, is found proportionally in other modes of the unit as well. This is readily seen in anything that involves continuous quantity: length, motion, time. For each of these there is a measure thanks to which my knowledge of them takes shape—so many yards, so many seconds, and I know at once how much is meant. But the notion of measure is not limited to the quantitative order; analogically it can be applied to other predicaments. And not to be overlooked is its relevance in the order of knowledge. In a sense, science (and knowledge generally) does measure reality; but more fundamentally reality is the measure, for in its capacity as object it measures the faculties of knowledge. All in all, the notion of measure has many important applications; while derived from the rela-

tion of number to the unit, its service to the mind goes far beyond that.

c) *The many: opposition to the one.*[16] Just as unity follows on the notion of nondivision, so plurality or multiplicity follows on the notion of division. The multiple is simply divided being. Between one and many (or divided being) there is, as mentioned earlier, an opposition of privation. The "one" implies privation or absence of division, the "many" privation of nondivision. Hence, to every mode of unity corresponds a mode of multiplicity. There is, however, an important distinction to be kept in mind concerning multiplicity itself; namely between numerical multiplicity, which is number and therefore limited to the predicament of quantity, and transcendental multiplicity, which pertains to every mode of being as divided. Nor, in its more general sense, should transcendental multitude (multiplicity) be identified solely with multitude as it applies to separate substances (angels), which constitute but one kind, albeit pre-eminent, of transcendental multitude..

Finally, we take note of a possible difficulty. One, we have said, is defined as absence or privation (in the large sense) of division, hence of multiplicity. It would seem, then, that the many (the multiple) is prior to one; if so, one could hardly be the measure or, in any way, the principle of the many. There is no doubt (in reply) that negation of division is the very essence of unity; however, the division which is negated does not yet imply the formal or express recognition of multitude as such. This recognition can come only after the mind has adverted to the unity of each member of the group. Consequently, the true sequence in

18 Cf. *In X Metaph.* lect. 4.

the formation of our first notions is as described by St. Thomas, to wit:

> First apprehended by our intellect is being, and then division, and next unity, which is the privation of division, and finally multitude, which is a composite of units. For even though things which are divided are many, they do not have the formal note of a many until the fact of being one is attributed to each of the particular things concerned.[19]

2. The True

a) *Formation of the theory.* This transcendental presents a more complex pattern, since the true—as also the good—denotes being, not in itself, but in relation to another. What is truth? is an age-old question. Offhand, most men would agree that it is the goal of all knowledge, the desire and perfection of the intellect: we seek knowledge because we seek truth. To speak of truth as the perfection of the intellect is to speak of it as in the subject, hence from the subjective point of view—a valid conception. As a matter of fact Aristotle conceives of it mostly in this way. St. Augustine, doctor par excellence of the philosophy of truth, reverses the perspective; and the tradition that attaches to his name has faithfully followed him. Truth in the Augustinian sense is in the object, or rather is an object that dominates and imposes itself upon the mind. Primarily and most properly this conception refers to the divine truth, eternal and immutable, in which created intellects participate. St. Thomas, heir to both traditions, undertook to reconcile them. For him, truth was indeed the perfection of the intellect, it was in the subject; but it was also in the

[19] *In* X *Metaph.* lect. 4, no. 1998.

object, an objective property of being deriving ultimately from the divine knowledge rather than the human. Truth, in short, was both logical and ontological.

b) *Logical and ontological truth in formula.* Truth always implies a relation between being and intellect. But the relation can be considered from either of its terms, either as based in the intellect or as grounded in being. Truth is in the intellect or, an intellect is true when its act (of knowledge) conforms with being, with what is.[20] True knowledge, then, is knowledge which bears a relation of conformity with its object, with reality. Thus understood, truth is defined as the conformity of intellect to thing: *adaequatio intellectus ad rem;* which, by common accord, is the definition of logical truth. Conversely, from the objective point of view, truth is in things or a thing is true in proportion to its conformity with the intellect. This is ontological truth, the conformity of thing to intellect: *adaequatio rei ad intellectum.* Both definitions (formulas) must be looked into further.[21]

c) *Logical truth.* Truth, in the primary sense, is in the intellect or, more generally, in the faculty of knowledge; and, as we have seen, it arises when (and in the measure that) the faculty is conformed to the thing. But the conformity exists on two levels, so to speak. For the intellect is already conformed to the thing in the act of simple apprehension, and the sense faculty is conformed to its object in the act of sensation. But neither the intellect at this mo-

20 This, in effect, is Aristotle's definition of (logical) truth—*verbatim,* "to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" *{Metaph.* r, 7, ion b 27).—[Tr.]

21 Cf. Text X, "Logical Truth and Ontological Truth," p. 272.

ment, nor the sense at any time, knows its conformity. Through its power of reflection, however, the intellect is capable of passing judgment upon its knowledge by comparing its apprehension with the thing apprehended, and thus it becomes aware of the conformity with its object. So that it is in judgment (the second operation of the mind) that the intellect comes in possession of truth as a known or recognized conformity; which, for the intellect, is obviously a more perfect state of affairs than the unrecognized conformity in simple apprehension. Logical truth is precisely the truth as known, the conformity that has entered the awareness of the intellect. Scholastics speak of this state of truth as formal; whence their conception that truth is formally in judgment rather than in simple apprehension. On which matter St. Thomas deserves to be quoted at length; his doctrine, it will be seen, squares perfectly with the above:

Truth is defined by the conformity of intellect and thing; hence to know this conformity is to know truth. But in no way does sense know this. For though sight has the likeness of a visible thing, it does not know the comparison which exists between the thing seen and that which it itself is apprehending concerning it. But the intellect can know its own conformity with the intelligible thing; yet it does not apprehend it by knowing of a thing *what a thing is* [simple apprehension]. When, however, it judges that a thing corresponds to the form which it apprehends about that thing, then it first knows and expresses truth. This it does by composing and dividing [i.e. in judgment]: for in every proposition it either applies to, or removes from, the thing signified by the subject some form signified by the predicate. So, then, the sense is indeed true in regard to a given thing, as is also the intellect in knowing *what a thing*

is; but it does not thereby know or affirm truth. . . . Truth, accordingly, may be in the sense, or in the intellect knowing *what a thing is,* namely, as in something that is true, but not as the thing known is in the knower, which is what the word *truth* implies. Yet the perfection of the intellect is truth as *known.* Properly speaking, therefore, truth resides in the intellect composing and dividing, and not in the sense or in the intellect knowing *what a thing is.*[22]

d) *Ontological truth.* This is truth as inhering in things, as a transcendental property of being. Its definition still includes reference to intellect, for truth of whatever kind implies a relation to intellect. But again the occurrence is twofold. The reference, namely, may be to an intellect upon which the thing in question depends for its existence, as the work of art upon the artist, and more properly, all creation upon the Creator; or it may be to an intellect which must bend to the thing it knows as to its object. Ontological truth refers, essentially, to the first mentioned, to the intellect upon which things depend, in the final count to the creative intellect of God. Primarily, then, ontological truth is simply the conformity of things to the divine intellect, all things having been preconceived by God and made to his knowledge.[23] In a less proper sense, however, things may also be said to be true from their relation to an intellect

[22] *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 16, a. 2; English Dominican translation, edited and annotated, with an Introduction by Anton C. Pegis in *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* Vol. I (New York: Random House, 1945).

[23] In a derivative sense we may, possibly, speak of ontological truth in respect of the human intellect; for while this cannot produce the nature of things, there is practically no limit to the ways it can fashion and refashion the things that nature supplies.—[Tr.]

(created, to be sure) upon which they do not depend. But this is an accidental relation as far as things are concerned, and to say that things are true in this accidental sense means simply that they have an aptitude to be an object of knowledge for a speculative intellect, for example that of man.[24]

In summation, truth is found:

—formally and principally in the intellect when in judgment;

—in the sense and in simple apprehension, on the same score as it is in all things true;

—in things, essentially by reason of their respective conformity with the idea according to which God creates them;

—in things, accidentally through relation to the speculative intellect, because it can (but) know them.

e) *The false.* Along with the true St. Thomas, not inappropriately, studies its opposite, the false. To be noted, among other things, is that there can be no transcendental or ontological falsity in the absolute sense; for this would mean that a being escapes the creative causality of the divine intellect, an impossible eventuality. Absolutely speaking, then, (which means in relation to the divine intellect) being cannot be false. In reference to the created intellect, however, (and specifically to the human) things may be said to be false when by their appearances they invite misconception of their true nature. So, for example, we speak of false gold; yet the reality in question is not false but true—true copper, true bronze, or whatever it truly is. Actually, to speak of things in this way is just that—a manner of speech, albeit a legitimate one.

24 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 16, a. 1.

But if ontological falsity is not strictly possible, logical falsity, as everyone can testify, is only too common. Like logical truth, logical falsity exists in the mind, and formally in judgment, which is false when it says of what is that it is not, and vice versa. As for the senses, and also the intellect in simple apprehension, these are always true, at least in regard to their proper object.

Appendix: The principle of sufficient reason

In connection with the intelligibility (which is the meaning of the truth) of being many authors discuss a principle not found in so many words in St. Thomas, that of sufficient reason, usually stated as "every being has a sufficient reason." The principle, in its modern development, must be credited to the rationalism of Leibniz, since when it has loomed large in many philosophical minds. And for all that one searches St. Thomas in vain for mention of it, the principle does bear an interpretation (though not the Leibnizian one) that fits it fairly into his thought.

The first approach is by way of another axiom, that "every being is true," which, no one doubts, is authentic St. Thomas. Every being, this means, is by its very nature ordered or proportioned to an intellect; hence "every being is true" has the meaning of "every being is intelligible." Not every being, however, is intelligible through and through, or perfectly. The intelligibility in question is perfect only if the being in question is perfect, or perfectly being; which, of course, is God, perfectly intelligible in himself—not, need we say it, to us. Created beings, compacted as it were of being and nonbeing, are in some measure shrouded from the intellect; which is to say, to such beings there necessarily

clings a greater or lesser degree of opacity, of unintelligibility. Our principle, then, does not mean that from the mere notion of being can be deduced the whole content of reality; nor, more to the point, that all reality yields itself perfectly to every speculative intellect. Such optimism, which characterizes certain forms of philosophical rationalism, is not justified by the facts. Extreme interpretation of this kind will be precluded if we give the principle the fuller formulation that "every being is intelligible so far as it is being."

If being is intelligible, there must be a ground for its intelligibility. This ground is precisely its "sufficient reason," that which both determines being to be and renders it intelligible. Every being, accordingly, is intelligible because for every being there is a sufficient reason, something that adequately accounts for what it is or has.

Tire sufficient reason, to go a step further, may be within a being, flowing as it were from its very nature or essence. The square, for example, or the color red are what they are because of their essence, which constitutes them what they are. This is plain in the case of the square; you cannot define it (which is to give its essence) without mentioning, among other things, its sides. But the sufficient reason of being is not always in a being itself or in its essence. If a man is white, this does not result from his essence, or all men would be white. In such cases, then, the being in question must have its sufficient reason in another, which will be its cause. As St. Thomas puts it, "Whatever belongs to a thing, but not as following from the thing itself, belongs to it through some cause, as *white* to a man." Which is the sense of,

> *Omne quod alicui convenit non secundum quod ipsum est, per aliquam causam convenit ei, sicut album homini.*

And why so? Because, continues St. Thomas, "that which has no cause is something first and immediate; hence it is necessary that it be by reason of itself and in consequence of what it is,"—the rendering of,

> *Quod causam non habet, primum et immediatum est; unde necesse est ut sit per se et secundum quod ipsum.*[25]

Being, accordingly, is what it is either by self and by essence, or by another. Whence we conclude the principle as follows:

> "Every being, as being, has its sufficient reason in itself or in another."

This formulation, it is worth noting, covers both orders of being; both essence and existence; however, we have already as much as said that the sufficient reason in one order is not the same as in the other. So, in the order of essence the principle says (in effect) that properties have their sufficient reason in the essence of the subject to which they pertain—for example, that the interior angles of a triangle equal two right angles stems from the very nature of this figure, and the fact of man's aptitude for instruction is a consequence of his rational nature. In the order of existence (or concrete being) the sufficient reason is a cause in the more proper sense of the word. Any being which does not exist of itself (hence a contingent being: this stone, this tree, etc.) has its sufficient reason in another as in its cause; and since causality is not all one kind, the sufficient reason will vary according to the line of causality. What we are

25 *Contra Gentiles,* II, 15.

saying, then, is that the principle of sufficient reason is an analogical principle and that its application must in consequence be analogical, varying with the orders of being and the types of causality. To forget this is to invite the extremest apriorism, a rationalism untempered by realism.[26]

3. *The Good*

a) *Formation of the theory.* With the good, as with the true, St. Thomas found a twofold tradition, the Platonist and the Aristotelian. According to the Platonist conception, which was to persist in the Augustinian school, the good is to be understood as a transcendent principle, existing apart from the material world. Given this premise, it was more or less inevitable that the Platonists should also hold the good to be prior and hence pre-eminent to being. The Aristotelian tradition, in line with its more realist orientation, takes the more familiar view, conceiving of the good as a perfection inherent to the things of experience. St. Thomas' contribution, again, would be one of synthesis; specifically, it was to be an accommodation of Platonist tenets to the Aristotelian scheme of the good.

b) *Nature of the good.* At the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle, in a well-known context, defines (or rather endorses the definition of) the good as that toward which all things tend: *quod omnia appetunt*—literally, "what all things desire."[27] Thus the basic thing about the good is that it bears on (and stirs) the appetite. If, as we

[26] For further discussion of the principle of sufficient reason see the excellent treatment of R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *God: His Existence and His Nature,* Vol. I, pp. 181-191 (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1934. Seventh Printing, 1955).—[Tr.]

[27] Cf. *Ethica Nie.* I, 1, 1094 a 2.

have seen, the true denotes a relation of intellect to being, the good for its part denotes a relation of being to the appetite—statements which but give philosophical expression to matters of common and indeed universal experience. But whereas the true resides primarily in the faculty of knowledge, the good lies basically in the thing; is, as a matter of fact, the thing itself considered as founding the property of appetibility.

That every being has the nature of good, or that the good is a transcendental St. Thomas establishes in the following manner. The good is what all things desire; but a thing is desired according as it is perfect; it is perfect, however, so far as it is in act; and it is in act in the measure that it is being. Conclusion (which necessarily follows): good and being are the same reality. But they are not the same in thought or concept; for the good conveys the formality of appetibility, which is not explicitly said when we say "being." St. Thomas gives all this in the following passage:

> Goodness and being are really the same, and differ only in idea; which is clear from the following argument. The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher says: *Goodness is what all desire [Eth.* I,r, 1094 a 3]. Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect, for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it is being; for being is the actuality of every thing, . . . Hence it is clear that goodness and being are the same really. But goodness expresses the aspect of desirableness, which being does not express.[28]

[28] *Summa theol.* la, q. 5, a. 1. (trans, from Pegis, *Basic Writings,* etc. See note 22).

Act, perfection, good: three aspects of being with meanings which, though not identical, are nevertheless so closely related that the thought of one suggests the thought of the other(s). And since in reality they are the same as being, it necessarily follows that being and good are convertible.[29]

c) *The good as final cause?*[30] Another related notion of the good is that of final cause. Clearly, whatever a thing desires as final cause can only be a good for it; conversely, every good can assume the formality of final cause. "Since the good," in the words of St. Thomas, "is that which all things desire, and since this has the aspect of an end, it is clear that goodness implies the aspect of an end" [i.e. final cause].[31] In short, the order of good coincides with that of finality—a self-evident truth once we know the meaning of "good" and "final cause."

It is also true that final causality does not act in isolation; it implies both efficient and formal causality, the formal as principle of the efficient. Nevertheless, the causality proper to the good precisely as good is final causality, which consists in evoking desire. Hence it is along the line of final causality that we must understand the accepted expression that "good is self-diffusing" (or "self-radiating"): *bonum est diffusivum sui.* The diffusion or radiation is not to be taken literally, like the emission of light from a body; which is to say it is not an activity of efficient causality. But, it might be asked, does not final cause or the good (it is all the same) have the status of an unmoved mover; and if so, does not this indicate an exercise of efficient causality? The answer

29 Cf. Text XI, "Whether Good Adds Anything to Being," p. 274.
30 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 5, a. 4.
31 *Ibid.*

is that they are indeed unmoved movers, but only when they are strictly themselves, i.e. only so far as they determine and govern the activity of the appetite.

d) *Kinds of good.* Since good is convertible with being its concept, like that of being, will be analogical; and for every particular being there will be a corresponding good. According to a classical division, which goes back to St. Ambrose, good is of three kinds: the *perfective,* the *useful,* and the *pleasing* (or satisfying) good.[32] Correctly understood this division is exhaustive. Good is the object of the appetite, or that which is desired. But what is desired is either a means to a further end, or it is itself the desired end. If the desired good is a means, it falls under the useful: *bonum utile.* If, on the other hand, the good is itself the desired end, two points of view emerge. Either the good in question refers to the object in which the movement of the appetite terminates, giving us the perfective good: *bonum honestum*—or it designates the subjective possession of this same object, the "quiescence upon attaining the desired thing," and thus is the pleasing good: *bonum delectabile.* There is no good that does not fit this classification. But we must not, among other things, read too much into the notion of "perfective good," which is not necessarily the all-perfect good (though that is included) but any good in which the appetite comes

[32] Which translate the Latin *honestum, utile,* and *delectabile* respectively. Doubtless, the expression *bonum honestum* has been the despair of many a translator, and the rendering "perfective good" may well be questioned. Others have represented it as the "virtuous," or the "disinterested," or the "autonomous" good—and the list could go on. But however one gives it, *bonum honestum* will stand a lot of exegesis when it comes to teaching the underlying notion. -[Tr.]

to rest. Even so, good in the primary sense is the perfective good, to which the useful is related as means and the pleasing as complement. The pleasing good, moreover, refers properly to beings endowed with affectivity (i.e. intellectual and/or sensory appetition) but is attributed analogically to other beings as well.

e) *Evil: the opposite of good.* Evil is a many-sided problem, far too complex to do it justice here. We should, however,—and that is all we intend—state the general position of St. Thomas as to the nature (loosely speaking) of evil, a position which follows logically from his conception of its opposite, the good. Opposites, as St. Thomas observes, can generally be known one through the other, as darkness through light. Evil, then, will be known from the nature of good. Now good is convertible with being; hence every being has the nature of good. Thus evil, the opposite of good, cannot be a positive being; it can only refer to some absence of being, (which means) of good.

It is impossible [concludes St. Thomas] that evil signify any being, or any form or nature. Therefore, by the name *evil* must be signified some absence of good. And this is what is meant by saying that *evil is neither a being nor a good.* For since being, as such, is good, the absence of being involves the absence of good.[33]

However, not just any absence answers to the meaning of evil; it has to be the absence of a modality of being which, considering the nature of a thing, should be present—so, to be wingless is not an evil for man but would be (say) for a robin. In formal idiom such an absence is a privation: the

[33] *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 48, a. 1.

lack of a due perfection (as is commonly put). An immediate deduction from this is that absolute evil is impossible; for, presupposing as it does a subject, evil always rests on something positive, which, because it is being, cannot but be good. Perhaps not so evident but just as true is that evil cannot be desired for its own sake, or precisely as evil. An appetite must always bear on what is (or presents itself as) good; and if it seems to be directed toward evil, this on examination will prove to be either an apparent or an incidental evil: the appetite is seeking a good to which some evil attaches. In short, only the good has the nature and aspect of desirability: *solum bonum habet rationem appetibilis.*

Appendix: The principle of finality

In the volume on the philosophy of nature (cosmology) we had occasion to speak of finality under the causes of mobile being.[34] But finality, it should be noted, operates not only within the area of nature; it is rooted in being universally, has therefore a metaphysical basis; which is the reason for returning to the subject now. A final cause (to proceed metaphysically) corresponds to a good; conversely, every good has the nature or formality of an end. This was made clear some paragraphs back. We have also seen that a being can only act for (which is to say, desire) a good; its every assertion, its every tendency is for a good, and if a good then an end. And this, in effect, is what the principle of finality says, that "every agent acts for an end":

[34] Cf. Volume II of the present series, namely *Cosmology*, chapter 5; trans, by John A. Otto (St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1958).

omne agens agit propter finem.

This principle can be substantiated in several different ways, and on different levels of thought. But the basic reason why there must be an end for every action is the metaphysical reason that potency cannot determine itself. If there is to be action from an agent in potency, this potency must be determined, and determined to some definite thing. Now, it is all the same whether we say an agent is determined to some definite thing, or that the agent is acting for an end. St. Thomas gives this train of thought in these (much the same) words:

> An agent does not move except out of intention for an end. For if the agent were not determined to some particular effect, it would not do one thing rather than another. Consequently, in order that it produce a determinate effect it must, of necessity, be determined to some certain one, and this will have the nature of an end.[35]

Thus, what comes into play here is, once again, the cardinal thesis of metaphysics that potency stands in essential (transcendental) relation with act, or (same thought) that potency is determined by act.

One further remark. Like any metaphysical principle, that of finality is analogical, true of all beings but in proportion to their nature, as St. Thomas in the above-mentioned context goes on to show.[38] Finality in inanimate beings is one thing, for they do not move themselves to the end but are moved. Significantly different, yet not wholly, is the like exercise in rational beings, who know and move themselves

[35] *Summa theol.* Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2.

[36] *Summa theol. art. cit.*

to the end. But greatest of all is the incumbent adjustment of the principle when said of the Deity; for God, properly speaking, does not act out of desire of the end—this would imply a want of goodness—but only from love of the end that is his own infinite goodness.[37]

III. CONCLUSION: THE TRANSCENDENTALS AS A SYSTEM

a) Do the transcendentals of Thomistic philosophy constitute a system, a complex of ideas bound together by their own inner logic? In point of fact the exposition of the metaphysical properties of being which we have just concluded did not proceed deductively; recourse to experience or to some basis in reality was involved in the study of each. Notwithstanding, once ascertained the transcendental properties do emerge as a system, a coherent and well-ordered assembly of thought in which necessary sequences of ideas are clearly discernible. These sequences, in the order in which they have been noted earlier, are the following:

being — nonbeing — principle of noncontradiction
being (as existent) — being (as essence) — principle of identity
being — divison — one — many
being — one — true
being — act — perfect — desirable — good

If we now ask ourselves what it is that leads the mind to the formation of each train of ideas as given above, the answer proves most revealing. Each procession of ideas, it

37 Cf. *In II Sent.* dist. I, q. 2, a. 1.

will be found, is commanded by discoveries of distinction or opposition—opposition not all of the same degree, however, but ranging from pure contradiction to mere relation. This points to opposition, or the mind's recognition of it, as an essential factor of intellectual life, the occasion (if not the stimulant) of intellectual growth and development. The idealists Hegel and Hamelin, we might note, were to perceive and pursue this theme unwaveringly. But a realist philosophy, too, is nurtured by the perception of opposition. Yet there is a difference; for in a realist philosophy the opposition conceived by the mind always relates to reality and does no more than reflect the antithetical diversity contained in reality.

b) Granted, then, that the transcendental make a system, what are its most notable characteristics? Above all it is, as just intimated, a *realist* system; more precisely, it is founded on the *primacy of the notion of being,* which but mirrors the primacy of being itself. Pythagorean and Platonist thought had always a marked propensity for giving priority to the Good or the One and conceiving them as separate or earth-shorn principles of which the things of earth were but remote participations. In St. Thomas, on the other hand, the prior (and first) experience is being, which is to say reality under the aspect of being, and good and one for their part are not given separate existence but become properties of that which exists, namely being. This view of the matter does not, of course, rule out a Being with the attributes of unity and goodness which gives being to all other things through a manner of participation; St. Thomas, as a matter of fact, adopts the principle of participation. But far from jeopardizing the metaphysical substantiality of things ter-

rene, participation in the Thomistic context tends rather to assure it.

On both counts, then, we have to do with a realist system of transcendentals; not only is it founded on being (reality), but the reality of experience (our world) is truly being. Furthermore, the realist universe of St. Thomas is thoroughly integrated; for, thanks to the convertibility of the transcendentals, the order of thought and action (presided over respectively by the true and the good) come together in being, ultimately in the first being, where unity and truth and goodness attain absolute identity with being itself.

c) Further characterizing the metaphysical realism of St. Thomas is a certain *intellectualism;* the true takes ontological precedence of the good. St. Thomas is very explicit on this point. There is, he says, an order among the transcendentals. Being is first, then one, next the true, and last the good. Or, as St. Thomas puts it:

> The order of these transcendent names, accordingly, if they are considered in themselves, is as follows: after being comes the one; after the one comes the true; and then after the true comes good.[38]

The true, then, as St. Thomas reiterates over and over, is prior to the good. Two reasons lead him to this conclusion.[39] First, compared with the good the true stands in closer association with being, which itself is prior to the good. For the true relates to being in itself or absolutely, whereas the formality (ratio) of good results from being according as it

[38] *De Verit.* q. 21, a. 3 c.
[39] Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 16, a. 4 c.

is perfect. To which St. Thomas adds this second consideration, that knowledge naturally precedes appetition. Thus, whether in activity or in object, the order of truth stands prior to the order of good. The implications of this position of St. Thomas appear at every turn; for the position is cardinal to his thought, governing every principal orientation. And it reverts, as we have now seen, to the very first discoveries of metaphysical inquiry.

t CHAPTER 5

The Predicaments

t SO far we have studied being in itself and those modes of it (the transcendental properties) which occur in being universally. With the predicaments—the term "categories" is also much used—we embark upon the study of being in its particular modes, which (as against the universal modes) are really distinct from each other and do not necessarily follow on being simply because it is being. Of these, therefore, we cannot say they are convertible with being.

That there are a number of such modes Aristotle regarded as self-evident. Inductively (consulting experience) he found that the supreme or ultimate genera of being (which are particular modes) came to ten, an enumeration that was to win lasting acceptance among his followers. These ultimate genera, or predicaments, divide first of all into *substance* and *accident,* substance denoting being which exists in itself, and accident being which can only exist in another. There are nine distinct modes of accident: quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, position, time, and possession.

As was brought out in the chapter on analogy, the predicaments are analogical modes of being. As a matter of fact, Aristotle regarded them as the typical case of the analogy of attribution, in illustration of which health is perennially, and aptly, cited. Medicine, complexion, and so forth are said to be healthy because of their relation to health as it exists in a living thing, specifically in the bodily organism, which alone possesses it formally or properly. Similarly, the various accidents are said to be being by virtue of relation to substance, which is more perfectly being than accidents. But being, as we know, is also analogous by proportionality; consequently, the being of accidents too is being in a formal or proper sense, and not by mere denomination. For all that, however, the primary and fundamental being of the predicamental order is substance, and that is why we shall give it more attention.

Some incidental matters should first be set down. In their totality (for one), the predicaments cannot be said of every order of being, but only of material beings. Quantity and whatever relates to quantity has obviously no place in the world of spiritual substances. And (for another), the predicamental division of being as St. Thomas conceives of it applies only to creatures; God remains outside or above it. Hence to define him as a substance, while not unheard-of, is none the less unsound—though even Aristotle is somewhat less than clear on the point.

I. SUBSTANCE

i. *The Existence of Substance*

The existence of substantial beings, or substances, is accepted without question both by Aristotle and St.

Thomas, and there is no indication they ever thought or were even tempted to think otherwise. For them, then, substance is (or comes to) an evident fact, at least in the sense that experience reveals it almost immediately, with little or no sifting required. Yet modern philosophy, from Locke down, sees nothing but difficulties in the thought of substance and soon arrived at the point where, as though by custom decreed, its denial was a matter of course. What are these hurdles that seem so insurmountable?

By definition, or of its very nature substance (it is said) lies beyond the senses; this alone should render its existence suspect. Behind this mistrust there broods of course the epistemological doctrine that all knowledge is of appearances and cannot overreach them. Since you can only know (runs the contention) what falls to the senses, to hold for the existence of substance is utterly arbitrary and unwarranted, if not indeed contradictory.

But granted (continues the argument) that common sense points to the existence of this latent, inert subject out of which the philosopher fashions his notion of substance, this proves nothing. Common sense is here led astray by a circumstance of the logical order, that every proposition has a subject; which no one denies, but it does not follow that things in reality must have one, too. In fine, those who put forth the metalogical subject, which is substance, are guilty of unwarranted reification, converting the logical subject of the proposition into a real subject of appearances. This and more has been laid against substance. Yet for the most part, as we shall see, modern philosophy's attack against it falls wide of the mark, having addressed itself in no small measure to misconceptions. Still, the effort was not

entirely wasted on followers of St. Thomas, for it obliged them to take a closer look at their doctrine of substance the better to maintain the ground on which it rests.

a) The simplest and most obvious way to substance is by examining that most common occurrence, change. Given in knowledge is a world of multiplicity with variety; not only are things many, but many-sided as well. Some aspects of these things change constantly, others appear more lasting. Water, a familiar example, goes from cold to hot, and conversely. As the temperature rises no one doubts that the water remains water. We could not even conceive of it as becoming warmer and registering a change of degree on the calorimetric scale unless it remained the same water. No matter how much it changes, if nothing remained from the original water, then what is now hot would not be the same water that was cold. Yet common sense tells us it is the same, though not the same temperature. Thus, the notion of change necessarily implies the notion of subject or substrate, a thesis set forth at great length in Aristotle's classic analysis of the principles of nature.

It is true, of course, that what is subject of change may, at another time or in another respect, be the thing that changes, in which case we must look for a further subject, anterior to the first. But the anteriorisation of the subject cannot go on indefinitely; the succession must come to an ultimate subject, one that is essentially (by nature) subject. It is precisely in this way, by tracing the course of change to its ultimate ground, that Aristotle makes his case for prime matter, which in a way is prior even to substance. For the present purpose we need not carry the analysis all the way back to prime matter. The issue here is substance, the

existence of which is proclaimed by those lesser changes called accidental, for they are simply unintelligible without an abiding substrate, abiding and (unlike prime matter) already determined of nature. Every change, in short, which leaves the essential nature of a thing unchanged supposes the persistence of the nature, supposes, that is, substance.

b) The demonstration of substance through the analysis of change is unquestionably valid. All the same, it does not bring directly to light what is most essential to substance; nor is it from this angle that Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* approaches the study of this (the first) predicamental being. Here, in the main, is what he says at the beginning of Book Z:

> Being has several meanings. On the one hand it means essence and the determined individual; on the other hand it signifies that a thing has this quality or this quantity or any of the like predicaments. But though there are these many meanings of being, it is obvious that being, in the primary sense, is the essence, which indicates the substance of a thing. . . . Other things are called being only because they are quantities of being in this primary sense, or qualities of it, or affections, or some similar determination of it... . Thus it is clearly by this category that the other categories each exist. Consequently, being in the fundamental sense, not this or that mode of it but being without qualification, must be substance.[1]

In Aristotle's view, accordingly, substance has not only the status of substrate but also the position of primary being, of principle of existence (in some respect) for the other modes of being. The passage just cited brings this out What may be overlooked, yet is of great significance, is the

[1] *Metaph.* Z, i, 1028 a 10-30.

controlling factor behind the thought of the passage; it is, once again, the analogical character of being, which for Aristotle is essentially an analogy of attribution. The modalities of being are many; this is fact. But the multiplicity is unintelligible, unaccountable, unless it have some common bond or unity; to have this unity it must be brought together under some first term, which in this case will be the first and essential mode of being (at least within a certain order of things). Such is substance, which in this perspective comes out more than substrate; it comes out as principle that renders unity and thereby intelligibility to the data, the multiform data, of reality.

c) In the light of what has now been established we can formulate an answer to the contention that substance is a fictitious entity or (if that is going too far) that it does not yield to perception, since this takes in only appearances, accidents. This criticism needs correction on the data of perception. What is immediately given in perception is neither appearances (phenomena) in the subjectivist sense nor substance as such; it is rather the concrete individual being embodying both substance and accidents in one indiscriminate whole. Thereafter, by analysis, we discern one from the other, the concourse of various and varying modalities from the unvarying substrate or substance. Not that substance as such meets the sense, but that which meets the sense, the concrete individual with its fluctuating modalities, has no intelligibility without recourse to substance, the substrate and primary being in one; in this the complex of accidents finds a rationale, a standing in reason as well as in reality. All which comes to this: that substance, while not an immediate perception, is an immediate inference—a necessary one, at that.

This conclusion leads on to another, also highly important. That substance exists is evident, in the sense we have just explained; but which thing in nature is an individual substance and which is not, we do not know with the same immediacy. As a matter of fact, read strictly the foregoing analysis compels the existence of but one created substance. Nevertheless, the plurality of substance is far more in conformity with the presentations of experience. Thus, it seems virtually impossible to deny substantial individuality to living things and, though here the thing is less clear, to ultimate elements of the inorganic kingdom.

Finally, we come to the objection that substance is but an unwarranted transposition of a circumstance of logic into a circumstance of reality. Against this we urge the following: when you analyze the judgment aright, you find that the modes of predication correspond with factual, not fictitious, modes of objective being. Logic corresponds with reality because the predications of logic are conditioned by objective determinations of being, and not the other way round. The predicaments, in short, and therefore substance, have existential import as well as logical signification.

2. *Nature and Properties of Substance*[2]

a) Nominally, substance (from *sub-stare:* to be under) means that which is under the appearances or accidents, hence serves as their subject. But though substance gives accidents their support, this property, as is the way of properties, does not express what is most basic to it, its essence. Aristotle comes closer when he writes: "Substance, in the truest and most rigorous and primary sense of the word, is that which is neither predicated of a subject nor

2 Cf. in particular Aristotle, *Categories,* chap. 5.

is in a subject." [3] This definition, though indicative of the essence of substance, describes it negatively, a "not-being in a subject"—*non esse in subjecto.* Since substance, evidently, is a positive perfection, it is more aptly denoted by the expression "to be in itself"—*esse in se.*

Substance, then, can be conceived under various aspects, and all of them come into play in the mind's discovery of what it is. Our first idea of it is as support of accidents, then as not being in another, and then as being in itself. Yet all this still leaves us short of the true essential, the formal constitutive, of substance. For, a predicamental division of being (and such is substance) is not defined by its existence but by its quidditative principle or essence. Since, then, existence is not of the essence of a predicamental being, to be perfectly correct we should define substance, not as that which actually exists in itself but "that which is equipped *(aptum)* to exist in itself and not in another as inhering in a subject." In Scholastic idiom:

> *quod aptum est esse in se et non in alio tamquam in subjecto inhaesionis.*

In addition, substance is sometimes spoken of as "self-being" or "being by itself" *(per se ens),* and "perseity" or self-beingness as its formal constitutive. This terminology is acceptable provided that the "by itself" be not taken in the causative sense. Strictly speaking, the only *ens per se,* being that exists by itself, is God. Substance is "by itself" only in the sense that it has everything it needs to receive existence. To receive existence, however, is to have it not in virtue of (or by) oneself but in virtue of another. We

[3] *Categories,* 5, 2 a 11-12.

must not, then, read the full force of the word into the "perseity" of substance; the logical outcome would be pantheistic monism, an eventuality well exemplified in Spinoza.[4][5]

b) Aristotle, in an effort to pinpoint the nature of sensible substance in particular, asks whether it is identifiable with one or more of the following: the universal, the substrate, the form, and the composite of form and substrate.[6] Ruling out completely the Platonist assertion that substance is the separate universal or idea, he builds to the conclusion that it is primarily form, hence the cause "in virtue of which matter is some determinate thing." Yet the substrate (or matter) is also given a measure of acceptance. His position, then, is this, that substance, though substrate, is also and most of all the formal principle, the determinate essence—a reminder, this latter, not to overdo the receptive or passive character of the material subject of accidents.[6]

c) In the *Categories* Aristotle enumerates six marks of substance, which are generally accepted in the Scholastic tradition. They are:

4 The caution urged by the author is well taken, indeed. In a maneuver against confusing them, some authors distingush the perseity of substance from the perseity of God by designating the latter as *a se*, which is said of being that exists not only in itself but also of itself or by reason of itself alone. Being, then, would be threefold:

1) from another *(ab alio)*— accidents
2) in itself, by itself *(in se, per se)*— substance
3) of itself *(a se)*— God

—Translator's note.

5 For this discussion, see in particular *Metaph.* Z & H.

6 Cf. Text VI, "Metaphysics As the Science of Substance," p. 260.

1) "not being in a subject"
2) "to be predicated univocally"
5) "to signify that which is individual"
4) "to have no contrary"
5) "not admitting of more or less"
6) "to be susceptive of contraries" 7

The first of these ("not being in a subject") does actually no more than repeat the negative formula for the definition of substance. The second ("to be predicated univocally") applies, of course, to second substance only, which is explained below under divisions of substance; whereas the third ("to signify that which is individual") holds true of first substance only, also explained below. The fourth ("to have no contrary") is true of both first and second substance, as is the fifth ("not admitting of more or less"). Regarding the fifth, however, note that it does not mean that one substance cannot be more truly or less truly substance than another, but that the same substance is not said to be now more now less the substance it is—a man (say) is not, at least metaphysically speaking, more man at one time than another. As for the sixth ("to be susceptive of contraries"), this is thought by Aristotle to be the most distinctive mark of all the true property—the *proprium,* as the Scholastics

7 Cf. *Categories,* chap. 5.
Since it may be of interest to some readers (while distracting to others if run in the text), the properties in Latin are:
1) "non esse in subjecto"
2) "univoce praedicari"
3) "significare hoc aliquid"
4) "non habere contrarium"
5) "non suscipere majus et minus"
6) "esse susceptivus contrariorum"—[Tr.]

have it. No other mode of being admits of successive contraries while retaining its identity; the same color, to take an example, cannot be green, then red, but the same apple can (assuming the apple to be an individual substance). So much for the marks of substance, first gathered by Aristotle.

3. *Divisions of Substance*

a) *First substance, second substance.* The most noted of Aristotle's divisions is that of *first* and *second* substance.[8] First substance is the concrete individual subject, as "Peter" or "Socrates." This is not present in a subject, nor can it be predicated of a subject. Second substance designates the universal which expresses the essence of a subject, as "man," "horse," etc. Properly speaking this is not in a subject either, but unlike first substance it can be predicated of a subject, as in "Peter is a man," he has (or partakes of) the essence of man.[9] Based, as is evident, on the predicabilities of substance, this division serves principally the logician. For the metaphysician substance is simply the concrete subject—first substance.

b) *Material, immaterial substances.* The basic division of predicamental substance is seen in the first dichotomy of the Tree of Porphyry, that of material (composite) and immaterial (simple) substances.

Distinctive of *material* substances is their composition of

[8] Cf. *Categories,* 5, *init.*

[9] If it be wondered at how something can be predicated of another and yet not be present in it, the answer lies in Aristotle's meaning, in this context, of "present in a subject"; by this, as he explains it, is meant "unable to exist apart from that subject." In this sense "man" is not present in "Peter," for Peter is not humanity. See *Categories,* 2, 1 a 24.—[Tr.]

matter and form, complementary principles which, the human soul excepted, cannot exist apart. That material substances are ultimately composed of the distinct principles matter and form is evidenced, mainly, by the fact of their generation and corruption, the study of which falls under the philosophy of nature. From a logical standpoint they are subdivided according to the specific differences "living, non-living," "sentient, nonsentient," "rational, irrational."

On a different basis was the ancient division of material substances by corruptible and incorruptible, a differentiation foreign to modern physics. The ground for the distinction was not the composition or noncomposition of matter and form; both admittedly bore this composition. Rather, the difference lay in the fact that corruptible substances (sublunary bodies) were subject to all manner of change, substantial included, whereas incorruptible substances (celestial bodies) were thought to be under no change but that of place.

Immaterial substances, on the other hand, are not composed of matter and form. They are known as pure forms, also spoken of as separate forms; yet this is only by analogy to material forms and, moreover, should not be taken in the Platonist sense of subsistent idea. The metaphysical and psychological (or noetic) investigation of these substances was not to meet with any real success until the advent of Christian philosophy, which could build its speculations in point on the firm foundation provided by the revealed doctrine of the angels. According to St. Thomas these substances, among other things, cannot be numerically multiplied; they lack, as will be seen below, what in

Thomistic thought is the principle of such multiplicability, matter. Each angel, it follows, is the sole member of (is in fact) his species; and the totality of angelic species constitues a formal hierarchy, founded on the diversity of essence.

4. *Problems Regarding Substance*

a) *Unity of the substance-accident composite.* The distinction between substance and accidents is a distinction of reality, not just of the mind. The nearest evidence for the distinction is that accidents, some of them at least, can change and even be totally corrupted without inflicting a change of substance. It can also be urged that some accidents run counter to substance, a circumstance that implies a real distinction between the two modes of being. Of its very nature quantity, for example, entails divisibility, whereas substance works in the opposite direction, making for unity.

Yet the distinction has been objected to on the ground that it impairs (if it does not destroy) the unity of the concrete being; and if you allow that, it becomes practically impossible to give a satisfactory account of the changes we see in things. For, supposing the real distinction, substance (it is contended) is sealed off from accidents; consequently, changes that occur must be regarded as coming from extrinsic factors only, surface modifications upon a substrate the while and forever inert. Substance, then, might still be the peg on which changes must be hung, though the moderns would soon remove the peg and (they thought) keep the changes withal.

The foregoing criticism is typical of a wide segment of modern philosophy. Yet the criticism, to repeat a point

made earlier, does not hit at substance but at pseudo-substance. Substance is represented as an inert substrate, and the real distinction is construed as isolating and insulating substance from accidents, and thus as disrupting the unity of being. But the truth of the matter is that accidents, while really distinct from substance, are not thereby prevented from combining with it to constitute a single, unified being. And if you ask how so, the answer is that accidents do not have independent existence; they "inhere" or (if the term be allowed) "inexist" in the subject. It is the concrete being that exists, a substantial reality that finds completion in its accidental modalities, all in a unified whole. So, too, it is the concrete being, the individual, that changes and acts: the man that thinks, the fire that burns, etc. Actions, it is a Scholastic axiom, are the supposit's—*actiones sunt suppositorum*. Consequently, it is completely off the mark to picture substance as one knows not what, an inert entity concealed behind a cloak of accidents which, cloak-like, come on and off mechanically. The concrete individual, the actual existent, though really multiple as to its principles is yet truly one, and acts as one, doing whatever it does from all that it is.

b) *Individuation of material substance.* Substance (first substance, obviously) can exist only as individual. Since there are many individuals, the metaphysician wants to know what it is that renders them distinct from each other. In the case of spiritual substances (which are pure forms), what accounts for their being distinct is their very form or essence; pure forms, this means, are individuated of themselves, of their very nature. Consequently, of such forms or substances there can only be one for any given nature;

which is to say, each angel is a different species—*quot angeli tot species.*

Material substances tell a different story. There we find not only many species but also many individuals of the same species, which makes them formally identical. Consequently, not differing in formal or specific perfection, they must be differentiated or individuated on some other ground. St. Thomas agrees with Aristotle that the root principle of this individuation is matter. And why matter? Because, among other things, the principle that individuates substantial being must be of the substantial order. The choice then narrows down to matter or form; not being form (since material substances do not differ formally), it must be matter, prime matter. But for matter to perform this function it needs to be determined by the accident of quantity; hence the principle of individuation is not matter pure and simple but, in the accepted phrase, "matter marked by quantity," *materia signata quantitate.*[10]

St. Thomas explains why the intervention of quantity is necessary. Form is individuated by being received into this distinct and determined matter; but matter becomes divisible, hence distinguishable, through quantity. Consequently, there is no distinction of material being except through matter already under dimensions of some kind, which is matter quantified. However, the quantification in question, St. Thomas continues, does not entail definite terminations or determined dimensions of matter, but only dimensions considered without fixed limits. "From these interminate dimensions," he concludes, "results *this* matter, signate matter; and as such it individuates form. And thus

10 In *Boet. de Trinitate,* q. 4, a. 2, resp.

from matter arises numerical diversity in the same species." [11]

c) *The problem of subsistence.* With the mysteries of faith, of the Incarnation in particular, came a problem about substance that had escaped philosophers, the vexing problem of subsistence. But though undiscovered by the philosopher, the problem concerns him as well as the theologian.

Subsistence involves the notion of *supposit* and *person.* Supposit, in the present context, means the substantial, subsistent individual; if the supposit is a rational being, the designation for it is "person." The problem, then, is this: in the existent individual, is there a real distinction between supposit or person on the one hand and individual nature or essence on the other? If the distinction is real, there must be something over and above individual nature, some formality or modal being which accounts for the autonomy and incommunicability that separate one existent substance from every other.

Most commentators of St. Thomas, at least since Cajetan, are for the real distinction. Substance, they explain, needs to be determined or terminated in the order of concrete autonomy by a special formality called "subsistence," which is conceived as a substantial mode. The mode, or subsistence, brings it about that a given nature belong to this individual only and cannot belong to another, (which is) that it be incommunicable. This additional entity is thought necessary because without it essence, though capable of determining and hence limiting existence to a specific nature, cannot account for the independence, the autonomy, that accompanies the existence of the nature. In all,

[11] *Ibid.*

the concrete subject of the created order stands forth as an individual nature completed by the distinct substantial mode, subsistence, whereupon ensues the ultimate completion (or perfection), existence proportionate to the nature.[12]

II. ACCIDENTS

a) *Meaning of accident.* Substance, we have seen, designates being that exists by itself, (in the sense of) not in another. Accident, on the other hand, does not exist by itself; it is, in formal definition, "the mode of being to which it pertains to exist in another as in a subject of inherence":

> *res cui competit inesse in alio tamquam in subjecto inhaesionis.*

This point should be stressed, that accident properly speaking does not exist by itself; it exists only in a subject,[13] though it is also true to say that the subject exists through it. Not that accidents sustain the subject; for the subject that receives accidents is already a constituted being, a being

12 No problem, it seems, is more recalcitrant to the philosopher's (and for that matter to the theologian's) probe than the problem of subsistence. For the position, as recently modified, of an eminent contemporary Thomist see Jacques Maritain, "On the Notion of Subsistence," in *Progress in Philosophy,* pp. 29-45 (f°r publisher, etc. see chapter 2, note 7). This article of Maritain's is excerpted from *The Three Degrees of Knowledge,* newly translated from the fourth French Edition under the supervision of Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 434-444 (Appendix IV).—[Tr.]

13 Tire theologian, to be sure, knows of an exception, the Eucharistic Species (accidents); but this transcends the order of nature. -[Tr.]

in (first) act. Nevertheless the constituted subject is in potency as regards the perfection which the accidental form is to confer upon it; and in this sense the subject exists (in second act) through the accident. Also, it is perhaps not superfluous to warn that the accident of which we now speak, the predicamental accident, should be scrupulously differentiated from accident considered as one of the five predicables, which refer to modes of predication.

b) *Schematic presentation of the accidents.* Aristotle, it appears, arrived at his collection of nine accidents by empirical test. They can, however, as we find St. Thomas doing, be derived on a more systematic basis, according as they determine the subject intrinsically, or extrinsically, or partly both.[14] The following passage details the procedure, the first paragraph (which pertains to substance) serving as introduction:

A predicate can be referred to a subject in three ways. This occurs in one way when the predicate states what the subject is, as when I say that Socrates is an animal; for Socrates is the thing which is an animal. And this predicate is said to signify first *substance,* i.e. a particular substance, of which all attributes are predicated.

A predicate is referred to a subject in a second way when the predicate is taken as being in the subject, and this predicate is in the subject either essentially and absolutely and as something flowing from its matter, and then it is *quantity;* or as something flowing from its form, and then it is *quality;* or it is not present in the subject absolutely but with reference to something else, and then it is *relation.*

A predicate is referred to a subject in a third way when the

[14] Cf. *In III Phys.* lect. 5; *In* V *Metaph.* lect. 9.

predicate is taken from something extrinsic to the subject, and this occurs in two ways. In one way, that from which the predicate is taken is totally extrinsic to the subject; and if this is not a measure of the subject, it is predicated after the manner of attire *[possession],* as when it is said that Socrates is shod or clothed. But if it is a measure of the subject, then, since an extrinsic measure is either time or place, the predicament is taken either in reference to time, and so it will be *when;* or if it is taken in reference to place and the order of parts in place is not considered, it will be *where;* but if this order is considered, it will be *position.*

In another way, that from which the predicate is taken, though outside the subject, is nevertheless from a certain point of view in the subject of which it is predicated. And if it is from the viewpoint of the principle, then it is predicated as an *action;* for the principle of action is in the subject. But if it is from the viewpoint of its terminus, then it will be predicated as a *passion;* for a passion is terminated in the subject which is being acted upon.[15]

Casting a critical eye over this table of accidents, we should find that two of them (possession, position) do not command as much interest or importance as the others, for all that they must be acknowledged to represent really distinct modes of being and predication. Possession *(habitus)* names an accident so extrinsic to a being that it is itself a substance or an aggregate of them, for example a garment; moreover, it is properly said of only one particular kind of subject, man. As for position *(situs),* this, to be sure, is not the same as place, for it tells, as place does not, the order of parts relative to each other; but it is clearly a

[15] *In* V *Metaph.* lect. 9, nos. 891-892.

This passage can be reduced as follows:

T) the subject..... substance

Predicament refers to that which is
- 2) or in the subject
  - -perse and absolutely
    - Ffollowing on matter.. .quantity
    - ^following on form.....quality
  - not absolutely..... relation
- 3) or outside the subject
  - "yet some way in it
    - as principle .action
    - as terminus passion
  - or entirely outside it
    - " and not a measure of it possession
    - ora measure of it
      - 'as to time when
      - as to place
        - 'but not its parts.. .where
        - and its parts.,. .position

derivative predicament and so, like possession (though this is not derivative), of less significance than place or the other predicaments. Aristotle's mind appears to be in line with what we are saying, for he does not always include possession and position in his naming of accidental being.

Again, in its totality the predicamental system applies to material substance only, a point made earlier. Only this substance is quantified; it alone (one kind of it) can have external possessions; and it alone is subject to the conditions of space and time and to the circumstances of transeunt action. This is to say that the study of most of the predicamental accidents is properly remanded to the philosophy of nature; namely, the treatment of quantity, possession, place, time, position, action, and passion. This leaves substance, quality, and relation. Of substance we have spoken. Of quality and relation we have now to speak; for these, encountered as they are in immaterial as well as in material being, are more definitely the concern of metaphysics.

1. *Quality*

Aristotle's principal exposition of the doctrine on quality appears in the *Categories.*[16] A secondary treatment occurs in the *Metaphysics.*[17] In both instances he follows his custom of empirical analysis, identifying and classifying the more prominent modes of being which could come under this category. The more logically conceived presentation of the topic, the standardized version as it were, we owe to his commentators, and notably to St. Thomas.

a) *Nature of quality.* The supreme genera of being can-

16 Cf. *Categories,* chap. 8.
17 Cf. *Metaph.* A, 14.

not, strictly, be defined. They are irreducible modes, and the notions corresponding to them will be similarly irreducible. What is possible is to advance from an indistinct grasp of such notions to a more clear-cut one. In the case of quality, Aristotle looks for this clearer understanding of it in the effects produced by the predicament, which, though varied, are yet somehow one; for the effect of quality is always to render a thing "such and such." That, as a matter of fact, is how Aristotle first introduces quality, as the predicament by reason of which things are said to be "such and such," i.e. "qualified." In Scholastic phrase:

qualitas est secundum quam res quales dicuntur.

Doubtless, the first "qualification" of a subject comes from its substantial form, which causes a thing to be specifically distinct from other things. But this first qualification or determination alone does not suffice for the entire perfection of a being. Required, in addition, are those supervenient qualifications belonging to the order of accidents; hence the qualities issuing in these additional qualifications will come under a predicament of their own.

But how does quality itself differentiate from the other predicamental accidents? Simply by introducing something into the subject which is not introduced by the others. For, while all accidents do in a way determine the subject, all do not "qualify" it, do not cause it to be "such and such" intrinsically and formally. Quantity, say, causes the material subject to be divisible, and its parts to be extended; but this, obviously, is not the same as to "qualify" it. Quantity and quality are therefore really distinct. As for the other accidents, if in some way they can be said to qualify the subject,

it is only from the outside, as it were, or in reference to something other than the subject. So that to "qualify" the substantial subject, in itself and intrinsically, can only be the effect of quality in the strict sense, such as color or those dispositions of body and soul which are named virtues. Consequently, there is ample ground for accounting quality a separate predicament.

b) *The species of quality.* Aristotle distinguishes four species of quality,[18] which St. Thomas reorganizes under a threefold classification.[19] As given by Aristotle they are:

1st species: habit and disposition

2nd species: capacity and incapacity

3rd species: affections and affective qualities

4th species: form and figure

Habit and *disposition* determine the substantial subject in regard to its nature, and are said to be good or bad according as they are, or are not, directed to the perfection of the nature in question. Habit, moreover, differs from disposition as the stable from the unstable; habit, accordingly, is more lasting, more firmly established. Examples of habit: intellectual virtues (science, prudence, art), moral virtues, manual skills.

Affecting the subject as to its activity are the qualities *capacity* and *incapacity (potentia, impotentia).* Capacity disposes the subject to receive or give resistance to an activity; thus, intellect, imagination, will (others could be mentioned) are capacities through which the subject receives (exercises) the activities of these faculties. If the capacity is undermined or weakened, it is called "incapacity,"

[18] *Categories, loc cit.*

[19] Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia IIae, q. 49, a. 2.

which, then, does not mean the total absence of a power or faculty. Enfeebled vision would in this sense be an incapacity, but not so total blindness; or (Aristotle's example), some men are healthy because of the capacity to resist unhealthy influences, others unhealthy because of a lack of this capacity,—but not a complete lack, which spells death.

Affections and *affective qualities (passiones, passibiles qualitates)* are qualities which produce, or are produced by, sensible alteration; that is, qualities from which alteration begins and in which it terminates. In general, they affect the senses immediately, and include the sensible qualities of bodies and the bodily temperaments and passions (feelings and emotions). Within the third species a distinction is made on the same basis as in the first species, relative permanence and impermanence. If the quality is lasting, it is one of the "affective qualities"; if quickly passing, it is an "affection"—example, the blushing complexion versus the blush of modesty. Among the basic qualities of the third species, in Aristotelian thought, are hot, cold, dry, wet, and mixings of them.

Finally, with respect to continuous quantity the distinction of *form* and *figure* is made, which proportion and terminate it, since it must be terminated or limited. Form adds to figure the note of due proportion and refers, in a special sense, to works of art. Thus, we speak of a spherical figure, but of the form (or shape) of a vase.

As indicated some paragraphs back, quality in the wider sense may also mean a mode or determination of substance, its specific difference. Bearing this in mind, we can (with St. Thomas) adopt the following arrangement of the foregoing matter:

according to substantial being=specific difference of the substance

Quality, a mode or determination of the subject

according to accidental being

in regard to the nature of the subject=habit or disposition (1st species)

action=capacity & incapacity (2nd species)

passion=affection & affective quality (3rd species)

in regard to quantity=form & figure (4th species)

2. Relation

It is evident that created things, each and all of them, are variously related to one another, by equality, by similarity, by causality, etc. There is a type of relation, however, which is more difficult to grasp, though it is quite real, the *transcendental* relation. This is not our immediate concern, but should nevertheless be sufficiently noted to distinguish it from the relation of which we do have here to speak, the *predicamental:*[20]

Transcendental relation is an order according to which a thing is of its very nature referred to another; for example, the relation of the will to good, of the intellect to being, and more generally, of potency to act. This relation is not really distinct from the essence of the thing concerned, but

20 Transcendental and predicamental relation are also known respectively as *secundum dici* and *secundum esse,* which, as the author explains, means relation as pertaining to the very definition of an essence and relation as a distinct mode of being and therefore with a nature of its own.—[Tr.]

expresses the essence itself in its reference to another. In short, it enters into the very nature of a thing and thus forms part of its definition. By contrast, the predicamental relation has its own reality, distinct from the subject which is referred or related. Hence it does not enter into the definition of the subject but has a nature of its own.[21]

a) *Nature of predicamental relation.* Predicamental relation is defined as an accident whose entire being consists in its reference to another:

accidens cujus totum esse est ad aliud se habere.

The whole essential, then, of this relation is a respect to something else, a "towardness" of some kind. But before the relation can arise certain things, it should be obvious, are required: 1) a *subject,* that which is related or referred; 2) a *term,* that to which the subject is referred; and 3) a *foundation,* the reason or aspect under which the subject is referred to the term. For instance, this man (subject) is similar, or is related by similarity to that other man (term) because of his, the subject's, white hair. Of course, the subject is in one sense a term, too, so that we may speak of the two terms or two extremes of the relation.

There are, however, difficulties attending upon the nature of predicamental relation, which have led some to deny its existence altogether. The predicamental relation is supposedly a real accident; yet all its being is comprised in the reference to another, in something which, as it were, hangs suspended outside the subject. How, then, can it still be in

21 For Aristotle's discussion of "relatives" see *Categories,* chap. 7; *Metaph.* Á, 15.

the subject, an accident of it, when its very essence consists in pointing to something outside, in the reference itself? Doubtless (we reply) the nature, the proper essential of the relation is reference or "towardness"; nevertheless, the relation cannot support itself, it must have a footing, a flooring, something that receives it. This is the subject, of which it is accordingly an accident, as (say) paternity is something real, but an accidental reality, for a man.

Another (and perhaps deeper) question is whether the relation is really distinct from its foundation. And more generally, if things are already related to each other transcendentally, why superimpose upon them a whole new order of relational entities, the predicamental relations? The answer (to the second question) is that these relations are demanded by the facts of experience; to be related to another constitutes a mode of being, hence a distinct predicament. A clear indication that these relations have an ontological status of their own is seen in the fact that a relation can appear or disappear without its term undergoing any modification in itself. As for the distinction between relation and its foundation, St. Thomas insists it is real; for, among other things, the distinction again meets the test of separability—indeed, the two questions (why relations at all, and what the distinction of relation and foundation?) come to one. Two white objects, for example, are related by similarity. If one object is destroyed, the relation ceases; yet the whiteness, its foundation, survives in the still existing object. But surely, what is really separable is really distinct.

b) *Division of predicamental relation.* A relation is either

real or logical (relation of reason): real, if it exists independently of the mind, as the relation of father to son; logical, if it depends upon the consideration of the mind, as the relation between subject and predicate of a proposition. Predicamental relation is of course real; it meets the requisites of a real relation, which are: 1) a real subject, 2) a real term, 3) a real distinction between them, yet so as to be referable one to the other, and 4) a real foundation.

Essentially, predicamental relation is divided according to its foundation. If this denotes that one thing depends in some way upon another for its existence, we have a relation of *causality* (not to be confused with the exercise of causality); otherwise, when no such dependence is involved, the relation is one of mere agreement or disagreement, the nature of which varies with the foundation. With substance as foundation the relation is one of *identity* or *diversity;* with quantity, one of *equality* or *inequality;* with quality, one of *similarity* or *dissimilarity.*

The accidental division is that of *mutual* and *nonmutual.* A mutual relation is bilateral, that is, bilaterally real: to the real relation of subject to term corresponds a real relation of term to subject, as father to son and inversely. The nonmutual relation is unilateral, real from one side, logical from the other. In knowledge, for example, there is a real relation of intellect to thing known, for the intellect depends upon the thing for its knowledge; but the relation of thing to the speculative intellect is only a relation of reason (or logical), because the thing is in no way affected simply by being known. Again, the relation is real from creature to Creator, but not real in reverse order, from Creator to creature.

All of which, in conspectus, reads thus:

Relation
- logical
- real
  - transcendental
  - predicamental
    - "regarding dependence of existence
      - mutual or nonmutual
        - foundation
          - action & passion: causality
      - not regarding dependence of existence
        - foundation
          - substance: identity-diversity
          - quantity : equality-inequality
          - quality : similarity-dissimilarity

t CHAPTER 6

Acl *and Potency*

i. Genesis of the Doctrine of Act and Potency

t THE distinction of being into act and potency was first enunciated by Aristotle, and while he may not have unveiled every development which this doctrine invites, no one questions that he established the essentials. St. Thomas had only to pursue the line of thought marked out by Aristotle, and the doctrine would attain fulfillment.1

It is in the *Physics,* when searching for the principles that would account for change, that Aristotle seems first to have employed the notions of act and potency. Already in the first Book the co-principles of matter and form are distinguished as act (form) and potency (matter). The distinction is subsequently invoked as the key to the understanding of motion, which is defined in these very terms as the act of what is in potency as such, that is, so far as it is in potency. Finally, after various other applications of the notions, the work culminates in the prime mover, pure act in which all motion of the universe is resolved.

1 Cf. St. Thomas, *In IX Metaph.,* with special reference to lectt. i, 5, J, 8, 9.

In the *Metaphysics* act and potency reappear to constitute, with the predicaments, the first divisions of being. The whole of Book Θ is given to act and potency, a book in which there begins to emerge Aristotle's concern to bring them to bear, not just an motion as such, but on a far wider range of reality, and indeed on all reality, that of pure form and immovable act included. What he does, in effect, is to lay the groundwork for the theological speculations of Book Λ, in which the primary substance is expounded under its proper characteristic, its pure actuality. However, Aristotle's utilization of act and potency is not confined to strict metaphysics; rather, the doctrine is pressed into service throughout his works. In psychology he is constantly having recourse to these two principles, and finds applications for them in logic and even in mathematics. Hence, it is really not to be wondered at that act and potency should be regarded by some as the cornerstone of his entire philosophy. But whether this be so or not, the central importance of the doctrine is clear enough.

As for its origin, that, as already intimated, traces to the problem of change. Aristotle's solution is traditionally, and quite properly, taken as middle to the extremes represented by Parmenides and Heraclitus. Between being and nonbeing Parmenides could find no alternative; the result was to deny the reality of change or becoming. His reasoning in point is simple, and decisive (granted his premise). Being, he protested, cannot come from being which already is; in other words, what is cannot become (what it already is). Nor can it come from nonbeing, which, in his view, must be nothing. And that is of course true; where there is nothing, nothing can emerge. Consequently, if being cannot come from being nor from nonbeing, it cannot come,

or become, at all. Result: there is no becoming, there is only being.

To this extreme the traditional Heraclitus opposes another, that change is not only real but (to all indications) the only reality; for, behind the incessant flow of appearances no abiding principle or reality is to be found. Hence all is becoming, and being as such does not exist. But if being is denied and only becoming affirmed, even becoming would seem to be ruled out; for what possible meaning is there to a becoming that does not become something, some being? 2

The problem, then, is one of salvaging both being and becoming. The distinction of act and potency points the way—the way out of the Parmenidean dilemma. We have simply to recognize a kind of intermediate state between being as fully determined, which is *being in act,* and nonbeing considered as pure nothing. This intermediate state is *being in potency,* which is real though not yet perfectly realized. Change, accordingly, becomes possible and is explained as a transition from being in potency to being in act.3 Suppose (to illustrate) that a sculptor decides on a

2 However, the traditional Heraclitus may not be the real one, a closer reading of the sources suggesting that this pre-Socratic was not the complete Phenomenalist he is much made out to have been. See, for example, R. K. Hack, *God in Greek Philosophy,* chapter 7 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931); or, for summary, Herman Reith, C.S.C., "The Marxists Interpret the Pre-Socratics," *The New Scholasticism,* 27, 4 (Oct. 1953), pp. 408-413.—[Tr.]

3 Objection has been raised, in this connection, to referring to change (or motion) as a passage or transition (cf. Vincent E. Smith, *The General Science of Nature* [Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1958], p. 257). While Dr. Smith is doubtless correct in remarking that transition or passage is itself a case of motion, hence should not be used in its strict definition, there would seem to be

statue. Selecting a block of marble he carves it down to his subject. Metaphysically speaking, what has taken place? When the statue is finished, it exists *in act.* But where was it before the sculptor put chisel to marble? Clearly, it did not exist in act, but did it exist in any way at all? If you say: no, it had no reality whatever, then the fabrication of the statue becomes unintelligible, inexplicable—an emergence from absolute nothing, which is absurd on the face of it. In truth, the sculptor could not apply himself unless there was at his disposal a suitable material, the marble, from which he extracted, as it were, the statue. To repeat, the statue did not exist in act in the naked marble, but it could be hewn because it was there in potency. In the fabrication it went from a statue in potency to a statue in act.

What is true in art is analogously true in nature, in the germination and growth (say) of a seed. The plant that has reached full development did not exist in act in the seed; yet exist in the seed it did, but in potency. We may generalize these examples and apply their particulars to all like cases. Change, every change, we shall find, is a going from being in potency to being in act. With that, both realities are safeguarded, the reality of becoming as well as of being. Thus what was (to some) the insoluble problem of change is resolved by the distinction of act and potency. These rudiments in hand, we have now to examine each member of the distinction more closely.[4]

no harm in using these terms merely to indicate that in motion (or change generally) tire state of potency is followed by the state of imperfect act and, at its termination, by the so-called state of perfect act.—[Tr.]

4 Cf. Text VII, "Potency and Act," p. 263.

2. *Potency*

a) *Meaning of potency.* Potency belongs to those primary analogous notions that cannot be defined, in the proper sense of the word. We have therefore to proceed as it were inductively, by examples, and by comparing one notion against its opposite, since what a thing is, is often conveyed by what it is not.

A first differentiation to be made is between potency and its cognate, *possibility.* Like being in potency, possibility denotes relation to existence; it can exist. But it does not yet exist in reality, it exists only in the mind of the one conceiving it, ultimately and basically in the mind of God. Because the possible as such exists only as an object of thought it is called *objective* potency; whereas potency in the proper sense, the sense spoken of here, is named *subjective,* meaning 1) it exists in a real subject, and 2) it is something real in the subject (having real, as opposed to conceptual, being).5

The mere possible, it follows, is simply that which does not involve contradiction; not yet real, it can be realized, at least by the power of God. By contrast, potency (or being in potency) belongs, as we have said, to the order of reality, as that ingredient of it which determines its further realizations—or better, actualizations. However, to be in reality is not necessarily to be in act; this is a crucial point, and it escaped Parmenides. Potency is real, a real mode of the

5 Attention might well be called to the special meaning of "objective" and "subjective" in this context, for in more popular parlance the objective order is precisely the order of reality and the subjective order the realm of the mind.—[Tr.]

subject, but it is not actual; indeed, potency as such is never in act, though what is in potency in one respect may be in act in another. It is fruitless, however, to seek a graphic image of a reality of this kind; the imagination does not portray it, but the intellect conceives it. Nor should the potential be equated with the implicit; the implicit may well be actual, never so the potential.[6]

But all this is a negative analysis of potency; and since no reality is all negation, a more positive conception is wanted. But how go about finding it? Simply by recourse to particular instances, to concrete examples, which will supply the analogies from which the positive concept can be formed. The case of the statue will do. The statue is in the marble that has not been carved, but it is there in potency. Or, another instance, thought is in the intellect that is not thinking, but it is there in potency. Now, whatever the instance, we find one thing common to the state of potency, namely *relation to act.* Potency always expresses relation to act: *potentia dicitur ad actum.* This is the quintessence of potency, its truest essential. Going a step further, we can say that potency is related to act as the state of imperfection to the state of perfection or completion. The finished statue is the statue in the state of perfection; in the uncarved marble it was in the state of imperfection. Where there is potency, there is *imperfection,* of necessity. Two things, accordingly, characterize every potency: relation to act, and imperfection. Whatever else be said of potency, nothing does it better than these.

6 It should perhaps be added that another way of distinguishing the mere possible from potency proper is to designate the former as *logical* potency and the latter as *real* potency.—[Tr.]

b) *Division of potency.*[7] Aristotle, as is his way in such matters, first sets out what he considers to be the basic kind of potency, the one in reference to which other potencies are named. This is the potency called *active,* the power to effect a change in another as other. Corresponding to this is the potency named *passive,* the capacity a thing has to be changed by another as other. Aristotle further distinguishes the *rational* and the *nonrational* potencies. Disregarded altogether, however, are those which are potencies only by equivocation, as occurs (say) in geometry, where one thing is said to be, or not to be, a "power" of another, depending on their relation or nonrelation. On the whole, then, potencies can be catalogued as follows (which includes some important additions of Scholastic origin):

Potency in the proper sense is the kind called *subjective,* which is divided against the mere possible, or *objective* potency.

Subjective potency is subdivided into *active* potency, the principle of activity in an agent,[8] and *passive* potency, the capacity of a thing to be changed by another.[9]

Considered in reference to the agent passive potency, moreover, is either *natural* or *obediential:* natural if the reference is to an agent immediately proportioned to it, obediential if it must be referred to a transcendent agent, specifically to the agency of God.

In regard to its act passive potency is further differenti-

7 Cf. *Metaph.* Θ, 1-2.

8 Latin: principium transmutationis in aliud in quantum est aliud.

9 Latin: principium quod aliquis moveatur ab alio in quantum aliud.

ated according as it relates to *essential* act (substantial and accidental form) or to *existential* act, the act that is existence.

Active potency, for its part, is created or uncreated; if created it pertains either to the order of immanent action, thus the *rational* potencies, or to action which is essentially transeunt, the case of *nonrational* potencies.

All which, in sketch, is this:

Objective: the pure possible, also called logical

Potency .uncreated (minus all potentiality)

Active'

rational

•nonrational

Subjective: potency proper, also called real

natural

relative to agent

obediential

Passive.

first matter

essential act\

second matter

relative to.

'existential act=essence

3. *Act*

a) *Meaning of act.* Act, like potency, is a primary notion which can only be grasped through example and illustration. Aristotle takes note of this circumstance; "we must not," he cautions, "look for a definition of everything but be satisfied to grasp the analogy, that it [act] is as what builds is to what is capable of building; as waking to sleeping; as what is seeing to what has eyes shut but has sight; as what has been fashioned out of matter to the matter; as what has been wrought to what is unwrought. Let act stand for the first member of these opposites, and potency for the other." [10] St. Thomas, in the wake of Aristotle, puts all this to summary when he says, "Act is when a thing is, but is not as in potency." [11]

Thus, one reveals the other. Potency is characterized and expressed by relation to act; act, in turn, is manifested through contrast with potency. Nevertheless, there is a notable difference; for, while act is included in the very notion of potency *(dicitur ad actum')*, the converse is not true, act does not necessarily imply potency. The first meaning of act is completed being, which may be only relatively complete. However, we do know of a pure act which is relative to nothing. Act, in short, is prior to potency, hence not necessarily attended by a potency. More about this as the chapter progresses. For now, suffice it that the positive meaning of act is completed being, which is to say *perfec-*

[10] *Metaph.* ®, 6, 1048 a 36-1048 b 5;

[11] "Actus est quando res est, non tamen est sicut in potentia" (cf. In IX *Metaph.* lect. 5, no. 1825; Aristotle, *Metaph.* ®, 6, 1048 a 31).

tion, whereas potency always conveys the opposite, imperfection.

b) *Division of act.* Aristotle, after elucidating the notion of act by citing concrete instances, calls attention to its being analogous and, without further ado, distinguishes the two typical varieties; act, he says in effect, is in one sense as movement to potency, in another as substance (i.e. form) to some kind of matter.[12] This, more simply, is the distinction between *operative* and *entitative* act, or act as operation and under its static aspect.[13] And since we are dealing with an analogous concept, one of these, the operative act, may be taken as the primary analogate, whence is derived the notion of the other.

Equally well established are a number of other distinctions, and first of all, that of *pure* and *mixed* act. Pure or unreceived act is void of all potency and is not received into a potency.[14] Mixed act, as the name implies, admits of potency, hence is any act that enters into composition with potency. Mixed act, moreover, can be divided according as it pertains to *form* or to *operation.*

In the static order (spoken of above) mixed act may refer

12 *Metaph.* ®, 6, 1048 b 8.

13 The author, here, apparently parts company with the more usual terminology, for *entitative* act is perhaps better said of *esse* than of essence (substance or form, it should not be forgotten, being of the essential order).—[Tr.]

14 In a being where essence and existence are distinct pure act can only be said, if at all, of its essence, for such a being is obviously not pure act or unlimited in every respect; the case in point is, of course, the angelic essence. But where, as in the unique case of God, essence and existence are identical, the pure act of essence is the pure act of existence; needless to say, this is the meaning of pure act in the unqualified sense—[Tr.]

to the essence, hence *essential* act, or to existence, *existential* act.

In the dynamic order (operation) occurs the distinction of spiritual activity, or *immanent* act, and physical activity, *transeunt* act.

In skeleton, the distinctions are:

Pure: unreceived

Ac — essential — substantial form / accidental form

In the order of beinj (static order) — istential=existence (esse)

Mixed

In the order of operation — immanent action / transeunt action

4. *Concerning the Relation of Act and Potency*

a) *Priority of act to potency.* Act and potency are correlatives but there is nevertheless a definite order, a sequence as it were, between them. Act is prior; act accounts for potency, but potency does not account for act as such. In Aristotle's analysis this priority is shown to obtain in several respects.[15]

First, act is prior in *concept* or definition; for potency is defined by act, that is, in relation to act, as the ability to build is known from the act of building.

Second, in the order of *time* a distinction applies. The individual is in potency before being in act; the acorn precedes the oak, the imperfect the perfect. But from the larger

15 Cf. *Metaph.* ®, 8.

point of view of the species the perfect state, which is act, precedes the imperfect state, which is potency. The potentially existent must always come from the actually existent, man from man, etc.

Third, according to *substance* (or perfection) act again is first, mainly because, in Aristotle's words, "everything that comes to be moves toward its principle and end; for the principle is the final cause, and the becoming is for the sake of the end, but the end is the actuality." [16] In short, the priority of act stems in this case from the priority of final cause, which has obviously to be act.

Lastly, Aristotle interposes an argument that marks a notable advance in his metaphysics as a whole. Eternal beings, he submits (without warning or discussion), are prior to corruptible ones. Then to the point at issue: that eternal beings have no potency to nonbeing, hence are not in potency; which is to say there are beings in act that are prior to all potency. This argument, it may be noted, does more than substantiate the priority of act; it anticipates the pure act, the burden of the subsequent Book Λ.

b) *Every activity has its principle in act.* Every activity must proceed from a being in act with respect to the aim and scope of the activity.[17] This proposition, which is axiomatic in the Aristotelian tradition, follows from the general priority of act spoken of above. The equivalent thought emerges from another Scholastic axiom, that what is in potency cannot be reduced to act unless by a being in act.[18]

[16] *Ibid.* 1050 a 6-9.

[17] As the Scholastic Latin has it: "nihil agit nisi secundum quod est actu."

[18] Latin: "quod est in potentia non reducitur in actum nisi per ens actu."

Potency, this means, cannot be raised to the level of act by itself; only a being already in act, exercising efficient causality, can bring this about. Yet, though necessarily in act, the agent must also have the potency to act. Is not this a contradiction? No, it is quite possible to be in act and potency at the same time, but not in the same respect. In a created agent act and potency are complementary. For the exercise of efficient causality the agent must be in act through possession of the form (or perfection) which is to be produced in another; and must at the same time be in (active) potency as regards the action to be performed. So, for instance, the intellect when actuated (or in act) by the impressed species, is in (active) potency as regards the act of intellection.

c) *Limitation of act by potency.* We have now, following Aristotle, set out the distinction of act and potency, defined the one and the other, noted their principal divisions, and established the priority of act. When we turn to St. Thomas the doctrine of act and potency receives, if anything, even more attention than it does in Aristotle; and certainly, it is put to far greater use. In fact, St. Thomas and not a few Scholastics regard the distinction of act and potency as in some sense, the key principle of metaphysical thought, the answer (or at least, an answer) to the riddle of being. Finite being is explained, basically, as a composition of act and potency; and since infinite being is grasped by us only through the medium of finite being, even theology rests on the doctrine of this distinction.

To say "finite" is, moreover, to say "limited." This brings up the metaphysical question of the limitation of being; or, what is it that limits a being intrinsically? St Thomas and his followers answer in unison: act can only be limited by

potency.[19] Thus, in the composition of act and potency act is related to potency as the limited to the limiting.

In proof of this we have the following. Of itself act means perfection. If, then, we find a perfection limited there must be a reason for the limitation. The reason, however, cannot be in the perfection itself; for if perfection is limited by itself then perfection is by nature imperfection, an obvious contradiction. Consequently perfection, if limited, is limited by a principle distinct from yet united with it; this principle is potency. Thus, in every composition of act and potency, act is limited by potency. The corollary to this is that pure act is absolutely unlimited, hence absolutely perfect. This line of reasoning, no doubt, is correct; but St. Thomas, while convinced of the conclusion, comes to it from what would seem to be a more organic and more realistic approach, namely, from the over-all consideration of participated and unparticipated being.

The opposing view held by Scotists and Suarezians should at least be mentioned, that act can be limited in itself. All that is required, then, for the limitation of act is that the extrinsic or efficient cause, ultimately God, should constitute it in this degree of being instead of that. Perhaps, in comment, this view suffers from a lack of attention to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic principle of limitation.

d) *Multiplication of act by potency.* If potency is the (intrinsic) principle of limitation, it is also, and for that

[19] As the Sacred Congregation of Studies phrases it: "actus, utpote perfectio, non limitatur nisi per potentiam, quae est capacitas perfectionis." For a complete statement of this second of the Congregation's 24 Thomistic theses, see below, p. 199.

very reason, the principle of multiplication. Suppose an act that is not limited by potency; such an act is unlimited or perfect, and therefore unique.[20] Unique, because if two beings were equally (and infinitely) perfect, one could not differ from the other; in fact, they would cancel each other. Wherever, then, perfection is plural, the perfection must be limited. But we know it is not limited by itself, hence by something not itself; and this, as we have learned, is potency, which limits act (or perfection) by receiving it and thus makes possible its plurification.

e) *Reality of the distinction between act and potency.* Scotists and Suarezians maintain that the distinction between act and potency is only "formal," that is, logical, but with a foundation in the things considered *(rationis ratiocinatae').* For Thomists, however, the distinction is real; and for St. Thomas in particular there could hardly be any question about the matter. The reality of it is generally argued this way. Potency denotes capacity for perfection,, whereas act of its very nature signifies perfection; such opposite notions must correspond to entities that are really distinct.

More authentic, perhaps, from the Thomistic stand would be the argument that act, because its reception into potency is by way of causality or participation, must be really distinct from the receiving potency. The distinction, for that matter, is also evidenced experientially, or a posteriori; for sometimes we observe that a potency is without the act it previously had—the sense (potency) of sight, for

20 Which, incidentally, is why St. Thomas holds for the unicity of every angelic essence, since this essence, as essence, is not a composite of act and potency but pure act (or form).—[Tr.]

instance, is not always in the act of seeing. Possibly the Scotist and Suarezian trouble with the real distinction stems from a too literal or too coarse interpretation of it. The composition of act and potency is not a union of two complete beings each of which could exist separately. We have said it before, a real distinction does not necessarily mean that the things in question can exist apart, though what is separable is certainly distinct. Act and potency are not two beings but two principles of being which determine each other but which, while really distinct, do not have each a distinct existence.

5. *Conclusion: Act and Potency as the Cardinal Principles of Thomistic Metaphysics*

First propounded in explanation and defense of the reality of motion, the doctrine of act and potency was destined for far wider application. It was in due course found to be relevant to the structure and the incident limitation and multiplicity of created being, as well as, in contrast, to the simplicity and infinity and unicity of God. Its utilization in these areas enlarged its scope immeasurably. It may be fairly said that the focal distinctions of matter and form, of substance and accident, yes of essence and existence are but applications, significant ones at that, of the still more pivotal distinction of act and potency. Here, then, it is commonly said, is a cardinal conception, the heart and focus of Thomistic metaphysics.

This appraisal is to the mark; there is scarcely a metaphysical problem to which the doctrine of act and potency does not lend some manner of solution, and exploring its possibilities has proved fruitful indeed. For all that, how-

ever, it would be a fatal illusion to imagine that once the essentials of the doctrine with its real distinction have been set forth, the machinery of logical deduction has only to be put in gear and all the central theses of metaphysics are automatically delivered. The distinctions mentioned above (matter and form, etc.) are original as well as comparable or similar to that of act and potency, and bringing them into line with the latter is in every instance a problem of its own, the solution coming not mechanically but through hard-won insight. We mention this, not to depreciate act and potency, but to caution against their oversimplication. Having made the point, we append, by way of recapitulation, the first two Thomistic theses proposed by the Sacred Congregation of Studies, veritable epitomes of the doctrine of act and potency:

Thesis I: Potency and act so divide being that whatever exists is either pure act, or is necessarily composed of potency and act as its first intrinsic principles.

(Potentia et actus ita dividunt ens, ut quidquid est vel sit actus purus, vel ex potentia et actu tamquam primis atque intrinsecis principiis necessario coalescat.)

Thesis II: Act, because it is perfection, is not limited except by potency, which is a capacity for perfection. Consequently, in any order in which act is pure, it cannot but be unlimited and unique; wherever, on the other hand, it is finite and multiple, it enters into real composition with potency.

(Actus, utpote perfectio, non limitatur nisi per

potentiam, quae est capacitas perfectionis. Proinde in quo ordine actus est purus, in eodem non nisi illimitatus et unicus existit; ubi vero est finitus ac multiplex, in veram incidit cum potentia compositionem.)[21]

21 The 24 theses were approved by Pope Benedict XV on February 25, 1916 and his approval published the following March 7 (feast of St. Thomas).

As for the bibliography on this capital doctrine of act and potency, it is mountainous and not even a select list will be attempted here. One aspect of the doctrine, the limitation of act by potency, has recently been put into historical perspective in an excellent article, and the interested student might well consult it, namely W. Norris Clarke, S.J., "The Limitation of Act by Potency: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?" *The New Scholasticism*, 26, 2 (April, 1952), pp. 167-194.—[Tr.]

+ CHAPTER 7

Essence and Existence

t THIS chapter follows naturally on the preceding; for the analysis of being into act and potency points clearly to the still more radical and precise analysis of it under the terms of essence and existence. The chapter envisages a conclusion of paramount importance; in Cajetan's estimation, "the ultimate foundation of all St. Thomas" *(maximum fundamentum doctrinae Sancti Thomae').*1 The conclusion: In created being the principles of essence and existence differ by a real distinction.

i. The Problem of the Real Distinction

That being has both the aspect of essence and existence is as much as admitted by everyone; it could hardly be otherwise, for these aspects are primary data for the intellect and inseparable from the very notion of being. After all, being comes to us precisely as "that which is," in other words, as something, an *essence,* endowed with the signifi-

1 Cf. his Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics,* chap. 6; English translation by Eugene Babin (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval).

cant trait of be-ing or *existing*. Eliminate one or the other from the notion of being, and the notion itself is eliminated.

Granted this, we have still to explain in detail how essence and existence stand to each other, their respective function in the formation of being, their contribution to its structure. More specifically, the problem under consideration is the distinction of essence and existence, about which there are, in the main, two schools of thought: those who deny the real distinction, and those who affirm it.

If the real distinction is denied, being has no real composition, no structural differentiation; it will be much like a solid rock, all of a piece. To speak of essence and existence is then mostly just that, a manner of speech, having only subjective value; for the distinction, even if granted some foundation in reality, would not exist as such in reality but only in the mind conceiving it. If, on the other hand, essence and existence are taken as distinct ontological principles, then the ultimate structure of being comes out as a composition of the two. In this case the distinction of essence and existence is of course real, yet not so as to render them independent existents. It cannot be said too often that this is not a distinction of things having existence before composition—which makes no sense at all—but of interdependent principles that constitute but one and the same being.

Philosophically speaking, the problem of essence and existence arises out of the formal multiplication and limitation of created beings and, secondarily, out of the relation of these to uncreated being, unique and infinite. Beings, as we know them, are many and limited. But whence this limitation and multiplication, it being understood there

must be an intrinsic as well as an extrinsic principle of limitation? The answer, for material beings, we touched on in connection with the individuation of material substance. Material beings, we noted, are composed of matter and form. Matter receives form and in receiving limits it and makes possible its multiplication.

This solution will not do, however, when it comes to the multiplicity of pure forms, such as, for St. Thomas and Thomists generally, the angelic substances. Devoid of matter, they have obviously to be limited and multiplied through something else. Which raises the question whether such beings do not bear composition of another kind to account for their limitation and multiplication. And the answer, it turns out, is yes, the composition of essence and existence. Furthermore, considering limited beings in their relation to uncreated and unlimited being, we may well ask how it is that the former retain their individual identity instead of being lost in pantheistic unity with the one primary being. Clearly, between limited beings and the infinite being with its utter simplicity there must be a difference of structure; and since the one is all simplicity, the others, it would appear, must harbor complexity.[2]

2. *Historical Sketch of the Problem*

Aristotle does not treat explicitly of the distinction between essence and existence. This will come as no surprise when it is remembered that also not expressly considered by him are formal multiplicity and the relation of limited beings to pure act. All the same, there is nothing in his philosophy that opposes the distinction; in fact, considering

2 Cf. Text XII, "Concerning Being and Essence," p. 276.

on the one hand his general orientation toward the concrete, the individual existent, and his looking to essence for the intelligibility of things on the other, it may be said that the logical tendency of his thought is toward the real distinction. However, the first clear intimations of the problem come not from Aristotle but from the Neo-Platonists.

One of the earlier names to the purpose is Boethius, who, in a passage that would be much quoted in support of the real distinction, contrasts "to be" (esse) with "what is" *(quod est).*[3] It has been argued, however, and successfully it appears, that Boethius does not use esse in the existential sense, and certainly he says nothing about the reality of our distinction.[4] For that, one has to look to the (much later) Arabian philosophers, for instance Alfarabi and Avicenna, where, at last, the real distinction is unmistakably affirmed. But Avicenna, in particular, left much to be desired, for existence is conceived by him as a kind of accident to essence; which earned him the sharp criticism of his fellow-Arabian Averroes, and later of St. Thomas. The truth of the matter is that, notwithstanding these earlier manifestations, it remained for St. Thomas to put the doctrine of the real distinction into proper focus and to give systematic development to the consequences emanating from it. And yet, one searches him in vain for an explicit and formal justification of the doctrine, likely because the controversy surrounding it had still to be ignited. Despite that,

3 In Boethius' phrasing, *diversum est esse et id quod est (De Hebd. PL* 64, 1311B).

4 Cf. the authoritative study of M.-D. Roland Gosselin, O.P., *Le "De Ente et Essentia" de S. Thomas d'Aquin,* pp. 142 ff. (Bibliothèque Thomiste, VIII [Le Saulchoir-Paris: Vrin, 1927]). This is by all odds the best historical introduction to the whole matter.

the thesis is implied in all his philosophy, is in fact central to it, so much that if the appertaining texts are interpreted in another sense, its entire structure collapses. As for the polemical phase of the question, this takes shape after St. Thomas, when Giles of Rome, affirming the reality of the distinction in a manner far from felicitous, invited the criticisms leveled against him by Henry of Ghent. Subsequently Scotus, and still later Suárez, both denying the real distinction, would stir interminable debate and discussion.

3. *Proofs of the Real Distinction*

Though St. Thomas never made it the subject of a formal treatise, the real distinction does find proof in his writings. The proof occurs in two principal forms. One starts from the objective (i.e. conceptual) distinction of essence and existence; the other turns on the consideration of received existence, the argument being that a received existence is really distinct from the essence receiving it.

a) The first proof, from *De Ente et Essentia,* is to this effect: Whatever is not included in the concept of the essence of a thing is extrinsic to the essence, hence superadded from without; but existence is not included in the concept of the essence of anything, therefore is added from without. The only exception, of course, would be a being whose essence is to exist—God. Because of its importance the proof wants the words of St. Thomas:

> Whatever does not belong to the notion of essence or quiddity comes from without and enters into composition with the essence, for no essence is intelligible without its essential parts. Now, every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being known of its existing. I can know what a man or a

phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it exists in reality. Hence it is clear that the act of existing (esse) is other than essence or quiddity, unless, perhaps, there is a being whose quiddity is its very act of existing. And there can be only one such being, the First Being. . . . Consequently, this excepted, in every other thing the act of existing is other than its quiddity, nature, or form.[5]

b) The second proof, more frequently invoked by St. Thomas, contrasts created beings, whose essence and existence are found really distinct, with the first being, where they are identical—assuming the existence of this being, God. As developed by St. Thomas the proof, while admitting of variations, never varies in substance. One statement of it, from the *Summa theologiae,* is this:

> Whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence ... or by some exterior agent. . . .
>
> Now it is impossible for a thing's being to be caused only by its essential constituent principles, for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own being, if its being is caused.
>
> Therefore that thing, whose being differs from its essence, must have its being caused by another.[6]

Thus St. Thomas, who then goes on to draw the conclusion that in God, the uncaused being, essence and existence cannot but be identical; which is what he sets out to prove in the article from which this passage is cited. However, if the identity of essence and existence is an un-

[5] *De Ente et Essentia,* chap. 5; trans, by Armand A. Maurer, C.S.B., On *Being and Essence* (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949), pp. 45-46.

[6] *Summa theol.* la, q. 3, a. 4; trans. Pegis, *Basic Writings,* etc.

caused being, it necessarily follows that the caused being does not have this identity, its essence is not its existence; hence the distinction in view is established, if not explicitly, at least by implication.

To sum up, because the being whose essence and existence are identical is unique, all others necessarily bear the real distinction and are caused by the being which excludes it.

4. *True Sense of the Distinction*

Since, generally speaking, objections to the thesis of the real distinction stem from misinterpretations of it, a correct understanding of what is involved is very much in order.

a) First, what is this *being* whose constituent principles are said to be distinct? It is the concrete substance, the actual existent, and not the mere possible. Our speculation bears not on a notion but on a reality.

b) In this reality we distinguish two aspects, two principles. One is the subject or essence, the transcendental "thing" (res). The other, for want of something better, we may call "existence." St. Thomas himself refers to the latter principle indifferently as the "to be as such," "the act of being," and (our more familiar) "existence"—respectively, *ipsum esse, actus essendi, existentia.* We say that between these two, between essence and existence, lies a real distinction. We mean that the distinction is not merely in the mind, not just a product of reason, but that it is embedded in reality, a mark of its structure. Yet a caution must be sounded. Essence and existence are really distinct, but they are not pre-existent things which come together to form a third. In the world of creatures, before being there is neither

essence nor existence, entities which are absolutely incapable of standing alone. Neither essence nor existence exists apart—even to say this jars the sensitivity. The only existent is the being they compose, saving their identity in God. Once for all, essence and existence are correlative principles having no reality except as complement of each other.

But how, more precisely, does one complement the other? On this point St. Thomas and his tradition have never hesitated; essence and existence serve each other (or, are related) as potency and act respectively.

Existence (esse), as such, is all act, and for any given being it is said to be the ultimate act or perfection—ultimate because, as St. Thomas remarks, "*to be* is the actuality of all acts, and for this reason it is the perfection of all perfections." [7] It is also, though ambiguity haunts the expression, what is most "formal" with respect to all that is in a thing; which (to forestall the ambiguity) does not mean it is a form.[8]

If existence is act, essence represents potency, a real capacity for act. It is not, however, the same kind of potency as prime matter; for in its own order essence is, as matter is not, something actuated or determinate. The difference shows well in spiritual substances, in which there is indeed potency but not prime matter. If St. Thomas speaks of the "matter" of such substances, he means their essence, which

7 "esse est actualitas omnium actuum et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum" (De *Potentia,* q. y, a. 2, ad 9).

8 For the meaning of "formal" in this context see Etienne Gilson, Being *and Some Philosophers,* pp. 170-171; second edition, corrected and enlarged (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952).

is comparable to prime matter because, like the latter, it too is in potency, though not in quite the same way. The spiritual essence is in potency to existence, but as essence it is all act. That is why St. Thomas describes it as "actual being of a kind, existing in potency." ⁹ In their own order then, both essence and existence function as determining principle; but existence, and not essence, is ultimate act, last perfection.

d) The potency of essence, we have said, is a real capacity for existence. But essence does not receive existence in the way substance receives a new determination through an accident. Existence is not, properly, an accident, a supplement to an already constituted being. Rather, existence is what is most radical, most vital to all being, and essence is what limits and determines the existence.

Much more, no doubt, could be said to clarify the distinction of essence and existence. The fundamentals, however, have been gathered in the foregoing paragraphs, which we conclude with a word of warning. The translation of essence and existence into potency and act represents a special application of the potency-act formula, an application in which, under pain of going astray, the analogical character of these principles has constantly to be watched.

5. *Composition of Created Substances, Simplicity of Uncreated Being*

With the distinction of essence and existence now in hand, it should prove enlightening to compare, more closely,

⁹ "aliquid ens actu in potentia existons" (De *substantiis separatis*, cap. 5, no. 35).

the metaphysical structure of one grade of being with that of another, the material creature with the spiritual, and these with God.

a) *Material substances* have a twofold composition: of matter and form in their essence, of essence and existence in their concrete reality. Form actualizes and determines matter; together they constitute the composite essence of the material substance, which is further composed with its ultimate actuality, existence. The principle of individuation for such substances is matter terminated by quantity, technically *signate* matter. To them, accordingly, applies this arrangement:

what is *(quod est)* = the individual
by which it is *(quo est)* = essence
by which it is *(quo est)* = existence

b) *Spiritual substances* are simple in essence, that is, not composed of matter and form. The composition of essence and existence does, however, appear in them, as of course in every creature. Regarding individuation, this the subsistent (or pure) form has of itself—matter, obviously, cannot be the principle of it here.[10] Thus, in the spiritual substance,

what is *(quod est)* = essence
by which it is *(quo est)* = existence

[10] It might be well to recall here that for a subsistent form to be individuated does not mean to be divided from other members of the same species (for in Thomistic doctrine there are no other members of the same species) but to be divided from every other species. This is merely an application of the principle that act is limited by potency. The subsistent form, being all act in the order of essence, is necessarily unique, incapable of limitation in the sense of multiplication.—[Tr.]

Essence, then, as appears from the above, can be considered as a subject *(quod),* this in the material substance, or as a formal principle *(quo),* speaking of the spiritual substance; whereas existence is always a formal principle, albeit in a very analogical sense.

c) *Uncreated being,* God, is absolutely simple. God, this means, is not distinguishable into subject of existence and existence of the subject, that is, into essence and existence. His existence *(esse)* is self-subsistent and identical with his essence; moreover it is infinite, from not being limited by anything at all. It is also necessary, since God's being excludes the possibility of its not-being. God, in a phrase St. Thomas favors, is *Ipsum esse subsistens,* Subsistent Being Itself.

Because the essence of God is to exist, some would have it that in God there is no essence. This is true enough if it means that his existence is not determined by a formal principle of any kind, but it is false in the sense that God's being has no nature at all, or is an indeterminate infinity.

6. *Originality of St. Thomas' Doctrine of Being*

Reading it closely, we should find that St. Thomas' analysis of being, with its stress on the real distinction of essence and existence, scores a significant advance over the Aristotelian analysis. The result, as Professor Gilson relates in a remarkable study,[11] is not simply Aristotle revisited but Aristotle revised and indeed transformed. In effect, what St. Thomas achieved was a metaphysics far more original than it has been given credit for, even by some professing his

11 Namely, *L'être et l'essence* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948), most of which is incorporated into *Being and Some Philosophers* (cf. note 8 for publisher, etc.).

name. In this connection, it may seem a curious thing but the persistent tendency of philosophers has been, and history proves it, to construe being as nature or essence. It is plainly so in Platonic thought, and even the substance (ousid) of Aristotle has still the appearances of mere subject of being, namely essence.

Avicenna, it is true, represents a notable leap forward in thought as well as in time, only, however, to be castigated by his fellow-Arabian, Averroes. Yet Avicenna still falls short of the Thomistic achievement. In his middle position existence is indeed discriminated from essence, yet essence again emerges as the basic structural element of being, upon which existence (the *actus existendi)* supervenes in much the manner of accident—a tacking on, as it were. In time a considerable number of Scholastics, under the influence of Scotus and Suárez, would also commit themselves more or less wittingly to the essentialist conception of being.12 The same is true of modern philosophy, possibly more so; from Descartes to Hegel, with Wolff and Kant as intermediaries, the essentialist position is in varying degree in command.

But when we take stock of St. Thomas, a new turn of thought appears. Not only does he ceaselessly affirm that in created beings existence is really distinct from essence—of which, for that matter, he was never in doubt—but also that existence is act, of all perfections of being the ultimate one, and that God himself is *Ipsum esse subsistens,* Subsistent Being (existence) Itself. Being, accordingly, whether of God or of creatures, is pre-eminently existence. So that

12 Cf. *Being and Some Philosophers,* chap. 3, "Essence and Existence" (discussion of Avicenna, Scotus, and Suárez).

it is more in keeping with the spirit of St. Thomas to say—though the converse, too, is perfectly correct—that being is an existence determined by an essence. We need not hesitate, then, to describe his metaphysics as existentialist, though not, it should be emphasized, in the sense that marks certain contemporary philosophies. Indeed, it is the existentialist character of St. Thomas' thought which sets it off from every essentialist or rationalist philosophy, ancient, Scholastic, and modern, and lends it the stroke of high originality.

t CHAPTER 8

Causality

t BEING has a dynamic as well as a static aspect; it not only is, but is active, a principle of activity: in a word, cause. This is what we have now to examine: being in its dynamic character, being as cause. Here again the problems are many and complex. Cause is one of the most frequently used notions in human thought; it is also one against which modern philosophy has directed some of its most pointed criticism; besides that, what the early philosophers taught in the matter is not easily gathered and sifted.

The chapter divides into three parts. First, as usual, we go to Aristotle and St. Thomas for their basic ideas on causality, and these in proper perspective. The conception thus gained is next put to test against the typical modern criticism of causality. The chapter then concludes with some extended remarks on the first cause, the consummation of the metaphysics of being.

I. CAUSALITY IN ARISTOTLE AND ST. THOMAS

Neither Aristotle nor St. Thomas has left a complete treatise on causality. Their thoughts on the subject, such as

we have them, are fragmentary and, frankly, more often developed by occasion of other matters instead of independently. Still, it is possible to marshal these thoughts into two broad units, which reflect two principal prepossessions: i) those which tell of causality as it relates to the doctrine of science, and 2) those which speak of it under the study of God (transcendent causality). The elaboration of causality in function of science is practically all Aristotle's, whereas its elucidation in reference to the study of God comes much more from St. Thomas.

1. *Causality in Scientific Explanation* [1]

Aristotle's doctrine of the role of causality in scientific explanation is found, principally, in two works, the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Physics,* Book II in particular. In these studies two conclusions stand out, which for the present purpose it will suffice to pass in quick review.

a) *Science is knowledge through the causes.* This, in fact, is Aristotle's very definition of science, expounded in the *Posterior Analytics* and echoed again and again in other works, especially in Book II of the *Physics* and in Book B of the *Metaphysics.* In the Latinized Aristotle,

scientia est cognito per causas.

What Aristotle is saying is that we "know" (have science of)

1 It may not be amiss to remind the reader that the author is speaking of "science" and "scientific explanation" in the Aristotelian sense, which is not always the precise sense these terms were to bear in the modem epoch. Yet all science, however understood, reveals a fundamental kinship. For some remarks in point see the author's *Cosmology* (Vol. II of the present series), pp. 82-86; trans, by John A. Otto (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1958).—[Tr.]

a thing when we know the cause (or causes) of it. Cause is the proper principle of scientific explanation.

Well and good, but we should also note what Aristotle is not saying. Neither he nor St. Thomas would have us look upon cause as a logical tool only. True, their doctrine of causality finds foremost expression within the framework of logical expositions, but this is not to suggest that they regard causality as void of validity in the real world. Quite the contrary; cause answers to the "why" of a thing and serves as principle of explanation for the very reason that it is, first of all, a principle of reality. Indeed, the principle of causality is essentially a principle of reality. St. Thomas says as much many times over; cause, he insists, as though anticipating future denials, bears directly on *esse,* existence, which means it bears on what is by nature most real, most concrete. Witness, for example, "the word 'cause' implies influence on the being *(esse)* of the thing caused." 2

b) *Causal explanations in the sciences are possible under all four causes.* This proposition is a hallmark of Aristotelianism. Since the causes are four in kind, so will be the causal explanations. In physical doctrine demonstration is by all four causes: material, formal, efficient, and final. Other sciences proceed more restrictively. Mathematics takes in formal cause only. Metaphysics, in the main, focuses on formal, efficient, and final cause.

c) *In summary,* cause may be considered in the order of *objective reality* and in the order of *explanation* or demonstration. Its primary order is that of reality; here, cause is precisely what gives a thing its being, and this through any of the four causes. In the derivative order of explanation

2 In V *Metaph.* lect. 1, no. 751.

cause is what gives the "why" or reason of a thing, and this, too, from each of the four causes.

Essentially, then, a cause is "that on which a thing depends for its being or its becoming." Which, in St. Thomas, is:

> *Causae autem dicuntur ex quibus res dependent secundum esse vel fieri.*3

Analyzing this definition we find that causality necessarily implies these three particulars:

1) *a real distinction between cause and effect*
2) *a real dependence of being*
5) consequently, *priority of the cause to the effect*

2. *Causality in Theology*

So far we have spoken of cause as it impinges on the order of physical explanation, the order of experience. But this application of causality, even though it satisfies the true notion of cause, is not the whole of it. Causality in its wider range, in its metaphysical or transcendent mode, is seen in the study of God, where the central problem is precisely his existence, or the demonstration of it. Aristotle had already provided such a demonstration, the argument for the prime mover, fortifying it with all the rigor of his philosophical genius.4 This famous argument, stripped of its cosmological overlay, is retained by St. Thomas, who accords it first place in his Five Ways, still the classical proofs of God's

3 In I *Phys.* lect. 1, no. 10 (Editio A. M. Pirotta [Naples: M. D'Auria, 1953]).

4 For Aristotle's development of the argument, see Books VII & VIII of the *Physics* and Book Λ of the *Metaphysics.*

existence.[5] We do not intend, however, to make a detailed study of the Thomistic proofs. What follows is but three of them, and these in sketch: the argument for the prime mover (First Way), the proof from the degrees of being (Fourth Way), and, in barest form, the proof from finality (Fifth Way). The second and third proof, from causality and contingency (possible being), are mentioned in passing.

a) *The argument for the prime mover.* For the details of the argument as presented by Aristotle the reader is referred to the analysis we made of it in an earlier volume.[6] St. Thomas, as we have said, keeps only the essentials of the argument, namely its metaphysical bases, which are not undermined by shifts in physical theory.

The argument, both in Aristotle and St. Thomas, begins with the fact of motion. It encompasses not only local motion, or the physical changes observable by the senses, though these of course come first to mind. Any becoming, any transition from potency to act can be taken as a starting point. If St. Thomas cites a physical change, this is no more than a pedagogical device.

Given motion, two principles are introduced in proof of a prime mover. First, "whatever is moved, is moved by another"—*quidquid movetur ab alio movetur.* This is the principle of causality in the more usual Aristotelian formulation of it. Motion, the principle intends, involves transition from potency to act, which is not possible except by agency of another, by a cause in act.

5 For the Five Ways of St. Thomas, see *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 2, a. 3.

6 Namely *Cosmology* (Vol. II of the present series), chapter 8, "Proof of the Prime Mover."

The second principle is "there can be no infinite regress in an essentially ordered series of movers." One mover may be moved by another, but if the series of ordered movers were infinite, there would be no first or unmoved mover, consequently no second or moved movers. More generally, in every order there must be a *first,* which, as principle or originator of the order, has necessarily to transcend it, to be outside of it. Thus, the order of moved movers requires a *first mover,* moved by no other. This mover, concludes St. Thomas, all men identify with God.

Such, in broad stroke, is the argument for the prime mover, which, it is plain, rests on the principle of causality. Of this principle we shall have more when addressing ourselves to the critical justification of it. What we wish here to remark is that the second and third proof of St. Thomas (his Second and Third Way) follow the same general pattern. The second proof begins with the order of efficient causes, such as experience shows us, and argues to a first efficient cause, which, transcending every series of caused causes, is caused by no other. The third proof proceeds from the palpable contingency of things to the affirmation of a first necessary being.[7]

b) *The proof from degrees of perfection.* This proof departs, or so it may seem, from the principle of causality. Whether or no, here for the moment is the thread of it.

The things of experience exhibit varying degrees of perfection. All things, for example, are good, but some are better; and all are true, but some are truer, etc. However,

7 St. Thomas, it may be worth noting, begins all his proofs with a fact of experience, which, in the Third Way, is the experience of contingent reality or, in the terminology of St. Thomas, "possible" being.—[Tr.]

not all perfections are to the purpose of the argument—only those which do not of their nature imply limitation, *pure* perfections, as is commonly said. Perfections of this kind are not confined to categorical being, but are to be found in being generally. Pre-eminently they are the transcendentals: the one, the true, the good, and of course being itself. Because of their transcendental character they are realized analogically from being to being.

This is the empirical premise of the proof, the degrees of perfection. Then to the principle on which the proof rests, namely: a perfection is spoken of as more or less only in reference to something that has the perfection to a maximum. Consequently, there is something which is most true, most good, and (it follows) most being.

But (to complete the proof) that which is the maximum in any order of perfection is the cause of all perfections existing in that order. Hence, there is something which is to all other beings the cause of their being, their goodness, their every perfection; and this we name God.[8]

Thus the proof, the interpretation of which has occasioned much controversy. On the surface the appeal, it would seem, is not to the principle of causality: from the degrees of a perfection the maximum of this perfection is immediately inferred. On the lips of St. Thomas, however, the proof is not complete, and does not formally terminate in God, until the maximum in a given order of perfection is set forth as the cause of all lesser realizations of the same perfection. Consequently, the principle of participation, which is admittedly in the foreground, still implies the

[8] There is no completely satisfactory substitute for the original Latin of this Fourth Way, which, it seems, has given the commentators more trouble than any other.—[Tr.]

principle of causality. All the same, the proof from degrees of being does throw new light on the relation of creatures to God, presenting a fuller view, as it were, than appears through the avenue of causality alone. St. Thomas, for that matter, was not one to depreciate the doctrine of participation, his treatise on God being inspired by it throughout.[9] Even so, we must not find in this treatise what is not there, intimations of a metaphysics that would oppose and perhaps supplant the metaphysics via causality. In St. Thomas, participation and causality are not pitted against each other, nor does the latter have to give way to the former, as though they were incompatible.

b) *The proof from finality.* This proof, last of the Five Ways of St. Thomas, starts from the finality and order seen in the physical universe.

Where (runs the argument) there is order, there is intention; and if intention, intelligence. Ultimately, then, there must be some intelligent being which directs all things of nature to their end. This being is God.

This proof is much favored in more popular works on the existence of God, and there is no doubt that the presence of order in the world is a theme well-suited to the purpose. The proof, for all that, is not without its pitfalls; to make its mark it has to be handled with care.

d) *Conclusion: causal dependence as the common element in the proofs of God.* The arguments presented constitute distinct proofs demonstrating, each from its particular standpoint, the existence of God, the first cause. Yet all the proofs have this in common: the metaphysical principle

9 A most notable example being the third argument in the capital demonstration of identity of essence and existence in God; see *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 3. a. 4.

that contingent being, or being which does not have its sufficient reason of itself, presupposes being that does, the being that exists of itself and to which contingent being is related by the bond of causal dependence. Being which is not of itself can only be of another—of another that is of itself. All theology, not to say philosophy, rests on this fundamental, the causal inference. Is this inference legitimate, well-founded? The question has now to be examined.

II. CRITICAL JUSTIFICATION OF CAUSALITY

The beginnings of the modem onslaught on causality are clearly discernible in the Nominalists of the late Middle Ages. Continued by the Cartesians, the attack culminated in complete repudiation of causality by the British Empiricists of the 18th century. Thereafter, modern philosophy was to take it for granted that causality is but an illusion, or at best a subjective category. Among the circumstances which made for this radical denouement was the stand of some Cartesians that God alone can be a cause in the true sense of the word, in which case secondary causality (the name for the causality of creatures) had of course to be watered down considerably. And so it was—reduced to a mere occasion for God to act. Causality becomes occasionalism, with a capital, to be sure.

By far the boldest stroke, however, came from such as Hume, in consequence of the phenomenalist interpretation of experience. Here, for the moderns, cause was systematically reduced to a mere relation of succession. To illustrate: I roll a billiard ball against another. The second ball begins to move. What is the explanation? The first ball, you naturally say, caused it (the second) to move. But the phenomenalist Hume will not have it so. All you saw (he

argues, rightly enough) was two motions, one after the other. And he allows that under the same or similar conditions the same thing will happen; one motion will succeed another, or one event another. Which is precisely the reason why, in his view, we come to regard the relation between the two motions as a relation of causal dependence and eventually, by some psychological habit, translate this (assumed) dependence into the absolute principle that "whatever is moved, is moved by another." So doing, however, we have gone beyond the presentations of sense; and this the phenomenalist view of things does not permit.

Kant, for his part, had every intention of safeguarding the necessary and universal character of the causal relation. But having posited causality as no more than an *a priori* (i.e. subjective) category, a mere law of the mind, he could not but deny that it had any objective validity. The truth is that Kant, even as his predecessors, fell victim to the phenomenalist view of sense knowledge; like them he denies in principle that the intellect can derive the intelligible from the sensible. Against these dissenting voices, which we have hardly more than called attention to, the reality or objectivity of causality must be uncompromisingly maintained; and maintained both in the realm of experience in the strict sense, and in the realm of metaphysics as one of its first principles.

i. *The Experience of Causality*

The causal relation is, in the first instance, come upon as a fact of experience. One thing, to all appearances, moves another, effects a change in another; we see this constantly, accept it implicitly. I touch the flame of a candle; instantly

I feel my hand burning, and instinctively lay the burning to the flame. Instances of this kind are multiplied a thousand times daily. Granted, the cause is sometimes assigned mistakenly, for sensible experience can be complex and difficult to analyze. Yet there are evidences of causal dependence, especially within my conscious self, so direct and unimpeachable that I would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to disbelieve them. Suppose you want to raise your arm; and now you have raised it. Is there anything more certain than that it moved from one position to another and that you were the one who moved it, caused its motion? The whole march of practical life and, it is well to add, of scientific endeavor rests on the supposition that things in this world, the world of experience, act upon each other.

We do more, however, than experience the causal sequence, the relation of real dependence of one thing upon another. We generalize it, so that under the same set of circumstances we confidently expect the same sequence, the same dependence. Metaphysics, however, goes still further, to the affirmation of causality as an absolute principle. With the recognition and enunciation of this principle causality appears in full view, and not merely under the aspect of generalized experience; for what has then been seen is that causality, under certain conditions, is a law, an absolute requirement, of being.

2. *The Principle of Causality*

This principle refers, as a rule, to efficient causality, which is the causality that usually comes under attack, as in the earlier-mentioned criticism of it. Of the principle so understood, two cardinal proofs can be given, one more

particular in scope, the other more inclusive and at the same time more penetrating.

a) *Whatever is moved, is moved by another.* This, as noted before, is how the principle of causality is usually formulated in Aristotelian thought: whatever is moved, is moved by another. While the principle can be vindicated on physical as well as metaphysical grounds, we shall speak only of its metaphysical basis, namely, the resolution of motion into act and potency;[10] for it is from the consideration of act and potency that the principle receives its highest support.

Assume, then, that motion is a fact—not just an illusion; furthermore, that it is a transition from potency to act, which for all practical purposes means any kind of becoming. We then argue:

Motion is a transition from potency to act. But a being in potency does not become actual by itself but only by some being already in act.[11] No being, moreover, can be in act and potency at the same time and in the same respect. Consequently, the going from potency to act can only be effected through the agency of another, through a being in act. Thus the principle is established: whatever is moved, is moved by another—*quidquid movetur, ab alio movetur.*[12]

b) *Being which is not of itself, is necessarily of another.*[13]

10 Which is precisely what St. Thomas does in the First Way; see *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 2, a. 3.—[Tr.]

11 "de potentia autem non potest aliquid reduci in actum, nisi per aliquod ens in actu" (from the First Way).

12 As St. Thomas has it, "Omne ergo quod movetur, oportet ab alio moveri" (First Way).

13 In the clause "being which is not of itself" the words "of itself" render the expression "ens per se" or "per se ens."—[Tr.]

To argue this proposition we do not set out from change or motion but from being which is not of itself, from being, this means,whose existence does not necessarily follow from its nature or essence. Such being is contingent (as against the necessary); nothing in its nature says it must exist, it can exist and it can just as well not exist. All beings encompassed by experience (by the senses) are contingent.

Now, what is to be inferred from contingent being? Considered in itself such being, as we have said, can exist and just as well not exist; its essence entails neither one nor the other. Consequently, its existence is in some manner an addition to its essence. Whence it follows that contingent being is a union or composition of diverse elements: essence and existence. But things which in themselves differ from each other cannot, as different, constitute a unity. If, then, they are found as one, as a unity, it can only be through some extrinsic cause having united them.[14] And such is contingent being, a unity or composition of diverse elements, hence a being that needs must have a cause.

c) *Justification from the principle of sufficient reason.* The foregoing conclusion on the necessity of a cause for contingent being may also be arrived at by considering the principle of causality as an application of the principle of sufficient reason. We would then proceed as follows. Every being that does not have its sufficient reason from itself must have it from another. The contingent is such a being; the sufficient reason of its existence is not in itself, in its essence, hence must be in another. Which comes to saying

[14] In the Latin of St. Thomas, "quae enim secundum se diversa sunt, non conveniunt in aliquod unum, nisi per aliquam causam adunantem ipsa" *(Summa theol.* la, q. 3, a. 7).

that the contingent is caused; causality, once again, is demanded.

d) *Ultimate ground of the principle of causality.* It is perfectly true, as more than one author has observed, that the principle of causality is not strictly analytical; the predicate "being of another" is not expressly contained in the subject "being which is not of itself." More concretely, I can have the notion of contingent being, say of this book before me, without adverting or tracing it back to its cause. But granted this, it must still be maintained that, derivatively, the principle of causality is self-evident (the meaning of "analytical"), for causality follows on the nature of the contingent somewhat in the manner of a necessary property. No sooner, that is, do I grasp "being which is not of itself" and "being which is of another" than I recognize that the two notions imply each other, that "being which is not of itself, is of another." St. Thomas says as much when he writes:

> Though relation to its cause is not part of the definition of a thing caused, still it follows as a result of what belongs to its nature. For, from the fact that a thing is being by participation, it follows that it is caused. Hence such a being cannot be without being caused, just as man cannot be without having the faculty of laughing.[15]

What St. Thomas has just said rests, ultimately, on the impossibility of more than one "being which is not of another." Clearly, "being which is not of another" can only be "of itself." If, then, the contingent was not caused, it would be a "being that is of itself" and thus there would be more than one "being that is of itself." Yet "being that is

[15] *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 44, a. 1, ad 1 (trans. Pegis, *Basic Writings*, etc.).

of itself," whose nature in consequence is to be, cannot but be an only being. For the infinite has no similar; God is one. Accordingly, the contingent cannot but be caused—under pain of contradiction.[16]

III. THE FIRST CAUSE

It is not our purpose, here, to give even the outlines of a treatise on God; this would take us beyond the limits we placed upon our study, intended to be no more than a general introduction to metaphysics. Thus, with the preceding considerations on causality we have for all practical purposes come to the end. What follows is but by way of summation, presented, however, with a view to showing that the thesis of a first cause, of a being that exists of itself, is not an alien accretion to the Thomist philosophy of being but its logical crown and consummation.

We saw, at the outset, that the first presentation to the intellect is that of being. Proceeding to a more formal consideration of being, we detailed its structure and determined its properties, the transcendentals. Next, we attended to those special modes of being that are most familiar, the categories or predicaments, and saw that substance is the fundamental mode, from which the others issue according to a certain ontological sequence. Came then the analysis of change, which opened up a new vista on being, its distinction into act and potency. And then, to account for the limitation and multiplicity of being, its real composition of essence and existence was found imperative.

The multiplicity of being leads into our final considera-

16 Here we see again the prime importance of the principle of contradiction; yet even this principle has not always been left its absolute inviolability.—[Tr.]

tions: on the first cause, on being that exists of itself. Reflecting on the beings of experience, we cannot but mark their imperfection, their essential poverty and insufficiency, unable as they are to account for themselves. They change, they are limited; and though they have being, they have it not of their nature, of themselves, but are dependent through and through, radically. It is just this lack, this indigence of being that looks to the existence of a first being, cause of all others. To this end, the various proofs. From being that is moved we are inexorably led to being that is not moved, the first unmoved mover; from being that depends on the efficient causality of another, to a first efficient cause; from contingent being, to a necessary being; from imperfect being, to a perfect being; from beings which tend toward an end, to a supreme ordaining intelligence. By whatever approach, the term is the same; the insufficient leads of necessity to the self-sufficient, whose name is God, whose sufficiency supplies for the insufficiency of all that is not God.

But to round out the Thomistic metaphysics of being two further points should be brought home: first, that God's essence is his being or, which comes to the same, his being is of itself (per se);[17] and second, that every other being is necessarily a being created by God, or being by participation.[18] Either way, then, whether from God to creatures or from creatures to God, the science of being comes full circle.[19]

17 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 3, a. 4.

18 Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 44, a. 1.

19 Cf. Text XIII, "That in God Essence and Existence Are the Same," p. 287.

That God's essence, to take the first point, is the same as his being is readily shown. In creatures, as we have seen, essence and existence are necessarily distinct. But in God they are necessarily identical. For God is the first efficient cause and therefore cannot have received existence from another. Nor can he have received it from himself—nothing causes itself. Consequently, existence must be his by nature or essence. Devoid, moreover, of all potentiality, there can be nothing in his essence save the pure act of his existence. The first existent, God in short can but be by his essence, and this in virtue of the very laws of participation. Impossible, then, that in God essence be one thing and existence another.[20]

Turning to creatures, we must conclude that every being that is not God must have been created by God. For, when a thing is found to exist in a subject by participation, it must have been caused by a being in which this thing exists of itself. But God is the being that exists of itself, and of such being there can be but one. It follows that all things that are not God are not their being (their nature is not their existence), but only participate in being. Consequently, and finally, whatever is diversified according to its participation in being is caused by a first being which is perfect not by participation or degrees, but absolutely.[21]

20 "Impossibile est ergo quod in Deo sit aliud esse, et aliud eius essentia" *[Summa theol.* Ia, q. 3, a. 4).

21 In St. Thomas' statement, "Necesse est igitur quod omnia quae diversificantur secundum diversam participationem essendi . . . causari ab uno primo ente, quod perfectissime est" *[Summa theol.* Ia, q. 44, a. 1).

Cf. Text XIV, "Whether It Is Necessary that Every Being Be Created by God?" p. 291.

Viewed against this perspective of Creator and creature, the whole metaphysic of the real appears in striking simplicity. At the summit is the principle to the whole, being that exists of itself, whose essence is to exist. Below, in radical dependence on this being, are the beings that cannot exist of themselves and therefore hold their existence from the being that does so exist. Such are the essentials, epitomized for us in the third of the 24 Thomistic Theses enunciated by the Sacred Congregation of Studies: "Wherefore, by the absolute nature of his existence, God alone subsists, He alone is utterly simple. All other things which participate in his being have a nature that restricts their being, and are composed of the really distinct principles of essence and existence." [22]

Just how, on the other hand, St. Thomas conceives this participation in the being of God, how it procures the creature the proper ontological status, all this is here left unsaid. These particulars are better reserved to the treatise on God, where being is scrutinized more thoroughly than is feasible in the introductory metaphysics. Suffice it to have brought the reader to the mere threshold of these further perspectives.[23]

The whole philosophy of being stems on the recognition that in God there is identity of essence and existence;

[22] In the language of the Sacred Congregation, "Quapropter in absoluta ipsius esse ratione unus subsistit Deus, unus est simplicissimus; cetera cuncta quae ipsum esse participant, naturam habent quae esse coarctatur, ac tanquam distinctis realiter principiis, essentia et esse constant."

[23] On the subject of participation the interested (and knowledgeable) reader will do well to consult L. B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1942).

whence it is that he is the fullness of being, fullness in which all other beings but participate. In the following passage St. Thomas, in a mood not unlyrical, finds this sublime (his word) truth adumbrated in the revelation God made of his name to Moses; it is a passage that will serve as fitting conclusion to our study:

> This sublime truth [he writes] Moses was taught by the Lord; for when he asked the Lord: "If the children of Israel should say to me: What is His name? what shall I say to them?" the Lord answered: "I *am who am*. . . . Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: *He who is* hath sent me to you" (Exod. 3:13,14), thus declaring His own proper name to be *He who is*. Now, every name is appointed to signify the nature or essence of a thing. Wherefore it follows that God's very existence itself is His essence or nature.[24]

[24] *Contra Gentiles*, I, 22; trans., with an Introduction and Notes, by Anton C. Pegis under title *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*, Book One: God. A Doubleday Image Book (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1955. Fourth Printing, May, 1958).

TEXTS

PREFATORY REMARKS

t THE principal metaphysical work of St. Thomas is undoubtedly the Commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. We have, accordingly, excerpted sizable portions, specifically Texts I-VIII inclusive, which treat of the following: the prerogatives of metaphysics (I); its "subject" (II); the transcendental one and the principle of number (III); the first principle of demonstration (IV); the principal modes of being (V); substance (VI); act and potency (VII); and God as life (VIII). These are followed by some texts on the transcendentals gathered from other sources, namely, *De Potentia* (IX), *Summa Theologiae* (X), and *De Veritate* (XI). For the problem of essence and existence the choice had obviously to be *De Ente et Essentia* (XII). Finally, the two *Summas* provide two most excellent Texts (XIII-XIV) which show the contrast between God and creatures, i.e. between being which is of itself and being which is by participation.

The texts we have chosen, as indeed St. Thomas in general, present special difficulties to the translator. In particular, the *De Ente et Essentia* and the Commentaries on Aristotle, including the *Metaphysics,* do not have the flow and finish we find elsewhere in St. Thomas, above all in the two *Summas.* This, of course, is to be expected; for in *De Ente et Essentia* we have to do with an early work, and in the Commentaries we have simply to reckon with the method St. Thomas saw fit to follow, the line-by-line exegesis of Aristotle. Nevertheless, precisely as commentaries the work on Aristotle shows as much the hand of the master as do the two *Summas,* where St. Thomas was free to give more rein to his own genius. The difficulties of translation, however, have also to be traced to the shortcomings of the present editions of St. Thomas, especially of the Commentaries; more than one passage, in its present form, must be left hanging until better readings become available. But for all that, the essential St. Thomas is never in doubt, whether in the texts we have assembled or more generally in the editions of his works.

[The texts are reprinted in English from individual sources. These have been mentioned in the Acknowledgments at the beginning of this volume and are again identified and acknowledged in the course of the texts.—Translator's note.]

I. THE PREROGATIVES OF METAPHYSICS[1]

(In *I Metaph.* lect. 3, nos. 53-65)

Among the passages which reveal most clearly Aristotle's mind on the nature of the supreme science must be counted

[1] The translation of Texts I-VIII is quoted from *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle,* 2 Vols. Translated by John P. Rowan,

chapters 1 and 2, *Metaphysics,* Book A. From St. Thomas' Commentary in point we have drawn the part that treats of the chief prerogatives of this science, namely that it is speculative, free, suprahuman, and the most honorable of all sciences. The first two prerogatives stem from the absolutely disinterested character of metaphysics, from the fact that it is not ordered to anything but itself; hence it is free and merits the name of speculative science. Moreover, it is not sought in view of the practical necessities of life, and for this reason it cannot be regarded as a possession of the human realm pure and simple; it transports us to the level of the divine. Appreciations like these bear eloquent testimony to the rare esteem in which Aristotle held metaphysical wisdom. (Collate with *supra,* "Metaphysics As Wisdom," p. 5).

A. *Metaphysics is a speculative science*

53. No science in which knowledge itself is sought for its own sake is a practical science, but a speculative one. But that science which is wisdom, or philosophy as it is called, exists for the sake of knowledge itself. Hence it is speculative and not practical. He proves the minor premise in this way. Whoever seeks as an end to escape from ignorance tends toward knowledge for itself. But those who philosophize seek as an end to escape from ignorance. Therefore they tend towards knowledge for itself.

54. That they seek to escape from ignorance is made clear from the fact that those who first philosophized and who now philosophize did so from wonder about some cause, although they did this at first differently than now. For at first they wondered about less important problems, which were more obvious,

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in order that they might know their cause; but later on, progressing little by little from the knowledge of more evident matters to the investigation of obscure ones, they began to raise questions about more important and hidden matters, such as the changes undergone by the moon, namely, its eclipse, and its change of shape, which seems to vary inasmuch as it stands in different relations to the sun. And similarly they raised questions about the phenomena of the sun, such as its eclipse, its movement and size; and about the phenomena of the stars, such as their size, arrangement, and so forth; and about the origin of the whole universe, which some said was produced by chance, others by an intelligence, and others by love.

55. Now, it is evident that perplexity and wonder arise from ignorance. For when we see certain obvious effects whose cause we do not know, we wonder about their cause. And since wonder was the motive which led men to philosophy, it is evident that the philosopher is, in a sense, a philomyth, i.e. a lover of myth, as is characteristic of the poets. Hence the first men to deal with the principles of things in a mythical way, such as Perseus and certain others who were the seven sages, were called the theologizing poets. Now, the reason why the philosopher is compared to the poet is that both are concerned with wonders. . . . And since wonder stems from ignorance, they were obviously moved to philosophize in order to escape from ignorance. It is accordingly evident from this that "they pursued" knowledge, or diligently sought it, only for itself and not for any utility or usefulness.

56. Now we must note that, while this science was first designated by the name "wisdom," this was later changed to the name "philosophy," since they mean the same thing. For while the ancients who pursued the study of wisdom were called sophists, i.e. wise men, Pythagoras, when asked what he professed himself to be, refused to call himself a wise man as his predecessors had done, because he thought this was presump-

tuous, but called himself a philosopher, i.e. a lover of wisdom. And from that time the name "wise man" was changed to "philosopher," and "wisdom" to "philosophy." This name also contributes something to the point under discussion, for that man seems to be a lover of wisdom who seeks wisdom, not for some other reason, but for itself alone. For he who seeks one thing on account of something else, has greater love for that on whose account he seeks than for that which he seeks.

57.....

B. *Metaphysics is a free science*

58. Aristotle now proves the second attribution, namely, that this science is free; and he uses the following argument: that man is properly said to be free who does not exist for someone else but for himself. For slaves exist for their masters, work for them, and acquire for them whatever they acquire. But free men exist for themselves inasmuch as they acquire things for themselves and work for themselves. But only this science exists for itself; and therefore among all the sciences only this science is free.

59. Now we must note that this can be understood in two ways. In one way, the expression "only this" may indicate every speculative science as a class. And then it is true that only this class of science is sought for itself. Hence, only those arts which are directed to knowing are called free [or liberal] arts, whereas those which are directed to some useful end attained by action are called mechanical or servile arts. Understood in another way, the expression may specifically indicate this philosophy or wisdom which deals with the highest causes; for the final cause is also one of the highest causes, as was stated above [no. 51]. Therefore this science must consider the highest and universal end of all things. And in this way all the other sciences are subordinated to it as an end. Hence only this science exists in the highest degree for itself.

C. Metaphysics is not a human science [possession]

60. Aristotle proves this thesis by the following argument. A science which is free in the highest degree cannot be a possession of that nature which is servile and subordinate in many respects. But human nature is servile "in many respects," i.e. in many ways. Therefore this science is not a human possession. . . . For man has as his possession what he can have at his command and use freely. But that science which is sought for itself alone, man cannot use freely, since he is often kept from it because of the necessities of life. Nor again is it subject to man's command, because man cannot acquire it perfectly. Yet that very small part of it which he does have outweighs all the things known through the other sciences.

61. Next he rejects the error of a certain poet, Simonides, who said that it is proper to God alone to have the honor of desiring that knowledge which ought to be sought for its own sake and not for the sake of something else. But it is not fitting that man should not seek knowledge which is in keeping with his own condition, namely, that which is directed to the necessities of life required by man.

62. Now Simonides' error came from that of certain poets who said that the Deity is envious, and that since He is envious He does not desire that the things which pertain to His honor should be shared by all. And if God is envious of men in other things, He is rightly more so in this case, i.e. in the case of the science which is sought for its own sake, which is the most honorable of all the sciences. . . .

63. But the basis of this opinion is most false, because it is not fitting that any divine being should be envious. This is evident from the fact that envy is sadness at someone else's prosperity. But this can occur only because the one who is envious thinks that someone else's good diminishes his own. Now it is

impossible that God should be sad, because He is not subject to evil of any kind. Nor can His goodness be diminished by someone else's goodness, since every good flows from His goodness as from an unfailing spring. Hence Plato also said that there is no envy of any kind in God. But the poets have lied not only in this matter but in many others, as is stated in the common proverb.

D. Metaphysics is the most honorable of all sciences

64. That science [he argues] which is most divine is most honorable, just as God Himself is also the most honorable of all things. But this science is the most divine, and is therefore the most honorable. The minor premise is proved in this way: a science is said to be divine in two ways, and only this science is said to be divine in both ways. First, the science which God has is said to be divine; and second, the science which is about divine matters is said to be divine. But it is evident that only this science meets both of these requirements, because, since this science is about first causes and principles, it must be about God; for God is understood in this way by all inasmuch as He is one of the causes and a principle of things. Again, such a science which is about God and first causes, either God alone has or, if not He alone, at least He has it in the highest degree. Indeed, He alone has it in a perfectly comprehensive way. And He has it in the highest degree inasmuch as it is also had by men in their own way, although it is not had by them as a human possession, but as something borrowed from Him.

65. From these considerations he draws the further conclusion that all other sciences are more necessary than this science for use in practical life, for these sciences are sought least of all for themselves. But none of the other sciences can be more excellent than this one.

II. THE "SUBJECT" OF METAPHYSICS

(In IV *Metaph.* lect. 4, nos. 529-547)

At the beginning of Book Γ Aristotle sets forth the object —in the logic of science, the "subject"—of metaphysics: being as being, and its basic properties; hence our interest in the passage and its commentary, interest all the greater because to determine the object of metaphysics is at the same time to consider the analogical structure of being. Only the analogical notion of being can embrace being in its universality together with its diversity. Aristotle, it will be seen, speaks only of the analogy of attribution, where substance is the primary term or analogue. St. Thomas, though not in the Commentary, views all things in relation to God, and thus carries his thought beyond Aristotle. For all that, however, his remarks herewith provide one of the basic sources of his own teaching on the analogy of being. (Collate with *supra,* chapter 2, "Being," p. 35).

A. *The "subject" of metaphysics is being, as being*

a) 529. First of all, Aristotle says there is a science which studies being as being, as its subject, and studies also "the attributes which necessarily belong to being," i.e. its proper accidents.

530. He says "as being" because the other sciences, which deal with particular beings, do indeed consider being (for all the subjects of the sciences are beings), yet they do not consider being as being, but as some particular kind of being, for example, number or line or fire or the like.

531. He also says "and the attributes which necessarily be-

long to being," and not just those which belong to being, in order to show that it is not the business of this science to consider those attributes which belong accidentally to its subject, but only those which belong to it necessarily. For geometry does not consider whether a triangle is of bronze or of wood, but only considers it in an absolute sense according as it has three angles equal to two right angles. Hence a science of this kind, whose subject is being, must not consider all the attributes which belong accidentally to being, . . . Now the necessity of this science, which considers being and its proper accidents, is evident from this, that such things should not remain unknown since the knowledge of other things depends on them, just as the knowledge of proper objects depends on that of common objects.

b) 532. Aristotle then shows that this science is not one of the particular sciences, and he uses the following argument. No particular science considers universal being as such, but only some part of it separated from the others; and about this part it studies the proper accidents. For example, the mathematical sciences study one kind of being, quantitative being. But the common science considers universal being as being, and therefore it is not the same as any of the particular sciences.

533.....

B. *Metaphysics considers both substance and the accidents*

534. Here Aristotle uses this argument: those things which have one term predicated of them in common, not univocally but analogously, belong to the consideration of one science. But the term being is thus predicated of all beings. Therefore all beings, i.e. both substances and accidents, belong to the consideration of one science which considers being as being.

Proof of the minor through the analogy of being

535. Aristotle accordingly says, first, that the term being, or what is, has several meanings. But it must be noted that a term is predicated of different things in various senses. Sometimes it is predicated of them according to a meaning which is entirely the same, and then it is said to be predicated of them univocally, as animal is predicated of a horse and of an ox. Sometimes it is predicated of them according to meanings which are entirely different, and then it is said to be predicated of them equivocally, as dog is predicated of a star and of an animal. And sometimes it is predicated of them according to meanings which are partly different and partly not (different inasmuch as they imply different relationships, and the same inasmuch as these different relationships are referred to one and the same thing), and then it is said "to be predicated analogously," i.e. proportionally, according as each one by its own relationsnip is referred to that one same thing.

536. It must also be noted that the one thing to which the different relationships are referred in the case of analogical things is numerically one and not just one in meaning, which is the kind of oneness designated by a univocal term. Hence he says that, although the term being has several senses, still it is not predicated equivocally but in reference to one thing; not to one thing which is one merely in meaning, but to one which is one as a single definite nature. This is evident in the examples given in the text.

537. First, he gives the example of many things being related to one thing as an end. This is clear in the case of the term *healthy* or *healthful.* For the term healthy is not predicated univocally of food, medicine, urine, and an animal; because the concept healthy as applied to food means something that preserves health; and as applied to medicine it means something that causes health; and as applied to urine it means something

that is a sign of health; and as applied to an animal it means something that is the recipient or subject of health. Hence every use of the term healthy refers to one and the same health; for it is the same health which the animal receives, which urine is a sign of, which medicine causes, and which food preserves.

538. Aristotle then gives an example of many things being related to one thing as an efficient principle [the example of "medical"]. . . .

539. And just as the above-mentioned terms have many senses, so also does the term being. Yet every being is called such in relation to one first thing, and this first thing is not an end or an efficient cause, as is the case in the foregoing examples, but a subject. For some things are called beings, or are said to be, because they have being of themselves *[per* se], as substances, which are called beings in the primary and proper sense. Others are called beings because they are affections or properties of substances, as the proper accidents of any substance. Others are called beings because they are processes toward substance, as generation and motion. And others are called beings because they are corruptions of substances; for corruption is the process toward nonbeing just as generation is the process toward substance. And since corruption terminates in privation just as generation terminates in form, the very privations of substantial forms are fittingly called beings. Again, certain qualities or certain accidents are called beings because they are productive or generative principles of substances or of those things which are related to substance according to one of the foregoing relationships or any other relationship. And similarly the negations of those things which are related to substances, or even of substance itself, are also called beings. Hence we say that nonbeing *is* nonbeing. But this would not be possible unless a negation possessed being in some way.

540. But it must be noted that the above-mentioned modes of being can be reduced to four. For one of them, which is the

most imperfect, i.e. negation and privation, exists only in the mind. We say that these exist in the mind because the mind busies itself with them as kinds of being, while it affirms or denies something about them. In what respect negation and privation differ will be treated below [nos. 564 ff.].

541. There is another mode of being inasmuch as generation and corruption are called beings, and this mode by reason of its imperfection comes close to the one given above. For generation and corruption have some admixture of privation and negation, because motion is an imperfect kind of actuality, as is stated in the *Physics* [III, 2, 201 b 31].

542. The third mode of being admits of no admixture of nonbeing, yet it is still an imperfect kind of being, because it does not exist of itself but in something else, for example, qualities and quantities and the properties of substances.

543. The fourth mode of being is the one which is most perfect, namely, what has being in reality without any admixture of privation, and has firm and solid being inasmuch as it exists of itself *[per se]*. This is the mode of being which substances have. Now all the others are reduced to this as the primary and principal mode of being; for qualities and quantities are said to be inasmuch as they exist in substances; and motions and generations are said to be inasmuch as they are processes tending toward substance or toward some of the foregoing; and negations and privations are said to be inasmuch as they removed some part of the preceding three.

544.....

545.....

C. *Metaphysics treats principally of substance*

546. Aristotle then shows that this science, even though it considers all beings, is chiefly concerned with substances. He uses the following argument. Every science which deals with many things that are referred to one primary thing is properly

and principally concerned with that primary thing on which other things depend for their being and from which they derive their name; and this is true in every case. But substance is the primary kind of being. Hence the philosopher who considers all beings ought to consider primarily and chiefly the principles and causes of substances. Therefore his consideration extends primarily and chiefly to substances.

III. THE STUDY OF THE ONE PERTAINS TO METAPHYSICS

(In IV *Metaph.* lect. 2, nos. 550-553, 559-560)

The lesson referred to here completes the preceding. If metaphysics studies being it must study the one for the very basic reason that between being and one the distinction is not real but only of reason. Objectively, one and being are the same thing. The paragraphs cited are of interest for the general theory of transcendentals as well as, in particular, for the relation of one to being. Clearly brought out, moreover, is the distinction between the transcendental one and the arithmetical (or predicamental) unit, the principle of number. (Collate with *supra,* "The Transcendentals in Particular," p. 128).

A. *One and being are really identical but differ conceptually*

550. That one and being are really identical Aristotle proves by two arguments [of which the first runs as follows]. Any two things which when added to some third thing cause no difference are wholly the same. But when one and being are added to man or to anything at all, they cause no difference. Therefore they are wholly the same. The truth of the minor premise is evident; for it is the same thing to say "man" and "one man." And

similarly it is the same thing to say "human being" and "the thing that is man"; and nothing different is expressed when in speaking we repeat the terms, saying, "This is a human being, a man, and one man." He proves this as follows.

551. It is the same thing for man and the thing that is man to be generated and corrupted. This is evident from the fact that generation is a process toward being, and corruption a change from being to nonbeing. Hence a man is never generated without a human being being generated, nor is a man ever corrupted without a human being being corrupted. Now, those things which are generated and corrupted together are themselves one and the same.

552. And just as it has been said that being and man are not separated either in generation or in corruption, so too this is evident of what is one; for when a man is generated, one man is generated, and when a man is corrupted, one man is also corrupted. It is clear, then, that the apposition of these [i.e. of "one" or "being" to man] expresses the same thing, and that just because the term one or being is added to man it is not to be understood that some nature is added to man. And from this it is clearly apparent that unity *[unum]* does not differ from being, because any two things which are identical with some third thing are identical with each other.

553. It is also evident from the foregoing argument that unity and being are the same numerically *[in re]* but differ conceptually; for if they did not differ conceptually, they would be wholly synonymous, and then it would be nonsense to say "a human being" and "one man". . . .

B. The transcendental one and one, principle of number

559. Nor does it seem to be true that the one or unity which is interchangeable with being and that which is the principle of

number are the same; for nothing that pertains to some special class of being seems to be characteristic of all beings. Hence the unity which is limited to a special class of being—discrete quantity—does not seem to be interchangeable with universal being. For, if unity is a proper and essential accident of being, it must be caused by the principles of being as being, just as any proper accident is caused by the principles of its subject. But it is not reasonable that something having a particular mode of being should be adequately accounted for by the common principles of being as being. It cannot be true, then, that something which belongs to a definite genus and species is an accident of every being.

560. Therefore the kind of unity which is the principle of number differs from that which is interchangeable with being; for the unity which is interchangeable with being signifies being itself, adding to it the notion of undividedness, which, since it is a negation or a privation, does not posit any reality added to being. Thus, this unity differs from being in no way numerically but only conceptually; for a negation or a privation is not a real being but a being of reason, as has been stated [no. 540]. However, the kind of unity which is the principle of number adds to substance the note of a measure, which is a special property of quantity and is found first in the unit. And it is described as the privation or negation of division which pertains to continuous quantity; for number is produced by dividing the continuous. Hence number belongs to mathematical science, whose subject cannot exist apart from sensible matter but can be considered apart from sensible matter. But this would not be so if the kind of unity which is the principle of number were separate from matter in being and existed among the immaterial substances, as is true of the kind of unity which is interchangeable with being.

IV. CONCERNING THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF DEMONSTRATION

(In IV *Metaph.* lect. 6, nos. 597-608)

The critical study of first principles, truths on which every demonstration ultimately rests, has become standard procedure in philosophy. To Aristotle, it seems, must go the credit for having introduced this criteriological chapter into metaphysics, as well as for having brought the discussion round to the principle which, for all practical purposes, would thenceforth be honored as the very law of understanding, the principle of noncontradiction. We have selected the more significant paragraphs of Lesson 6 in St. Thomas' Commentary on *Metaphysics,* Book IV, paragraphs which form the natural introduction to the question at hand. (Collate with *supra,* "First Principles," p. 106).

A. *Conditions which the most certain principle must meet*

597. Aristotle lays down three conditions for this principle. The first is that no one can make a mistake or be in error regarding it. And this is evident because, since men make mistakes only about those things which they do not know, then that principle about which no one can be mistaken must be the one which is best known.

598. The second condition is that it must "not be hypothetical," i.e. it must not be held as a supposition, as those things which are maintained through some kind of common agreement. . . . And this is true, because whatever is necessary for understanding anything at all about being "is not hypothetical," i.e. it is not a supposition but must be self-evident. And this is

true because whatever is necessary for understanding anything at all must be known by anyone who knows other things.

599. The third condition is that it be not acquired by demonstration or by any similar method, but that it come, in a sense, by nature to the one having it inasmuch as it is naturally known and not acquired. For first principles become known through the natural light of the agent intellect, and they are not acquired by any process of reasoning but by having their terms become known. This comes about by reason of the fact that memory is derived from sensible things, experience from memory, and knowledge of those terms from experience. And when they are known, common propositions of this kind, which are the principles of the arts and sciences, become known. Hence it is evident that the most certain or firmest principle should be such that there can be no error regarding it; that it be not hypothetical; and that it come naturally to the one having it.

B. *Which principle meets these conditions?*

600. Then he indicates the principle that meets the above conditions. And he says it is this principle, as the one which is firmest, namely: that it is impossible for the same attribute both to belong and not belong to the same subject at the same time. And it is necessary to add "in the same respect"; and any other qualifications that have to be given regarding this principle "to meet dialectical difficulties" must be laid down, since without these qualifications there would seem to be a contradiction when there is none.

601. That this principle must meet the conditions given above he shows as follows: it is impossible for anyone to think, or hold as an opinion, that the same thing both is and is not at the same time, although some believe that Heraclitus was of this opinion. But while it is true that Heraclitus spoke in this way, he could not think that this is true; for it is not necessary that

everything that a person says he should accept mentally or hold as an opinion.

602. But if one were to say that it is possible for someone to think that the same thing both is and is not at the same time, this absurd consequence follows: contraries could belong to the same subject at the same time. And this is clear from a well-known teaching in logic. For it is shown at the end of the *Perihermeneas* [De *Interpretatione,* 14, 23 b 23] that contrary opinions are not those which have to do with contraries but those which have to do with contradictories, properly speaking. For when one person thinks that Socrates is white and another thinks that he is black, these are not contrary opinions in the primary and proper sense; but contrary opinions are had when one person thinks that Socrates is white and another thinks that he is not white.

603. Therefore, if someone were to think that two contradictories are true at the same time by thinking that the same thing both is and is not at the same time, he will have contrary opinions at the same time; and thus contraries will belong to the same thing at the same time. But this is impossible. It is impossible, then, for anyone to be mistaken in his own mind about these things and to think that the same thing both is and is not at the same time. And it is for this reason that all demonstrations reduce their propositions to this proposition as the ultimate opinion common to all; for this proposition is by nature the starting point and "the axiom of all axioms."

604. The other two conditions are therefore evident, because, in so far as those making demonstrations reduce all their arguments to this principle as the ultimate one by referring them to it, evidently this principle is not based on an assumption. Indeed, in so far as it is by nature a starting point, it clearly comes as by nature to the one having it and is not acquired by his own effort.

605. Now for the purpose of making this evident it must be noted that, since the intellect has two operations, one by which it knows quiddities, which is called the understanding of indivisibles, and another by which it combines and separates, there is something first in both operations. In the first operation the first thing that the intellect conceives is *being,* and in this operation nothing else can be conceived unless being is understood. And because this principle—it is impossible for a thing both to be and not be at the same time—depends on the understanding of being (just as the principle, every whole is greater than one of its parts, depends on the understanding of whole and part), therefore this principle is by nature also the first in the second operation of the intellect, i.e. in the act of combining and separating. And no one can understand anything by this second intellectual operation unless this principle is understood. For just as a whole and its parts are understood only by understanding being, in a similar way the principle that every whole is greater than one of its parts is understood only if the aforesaid firmest or most certain principle is understood.

C. Errors *committed in regard to this principle*

a) Error *of those who deny this principle* (no. 606)

b) Error *of those who want to demonstrate it* (no. 607). There are some, says Aristotle, who deem it fitting, i.e. who wish to demonstrate this principle; and they do this "through want of education," i.e. through lack of learning or instruction. For there is want of education when a man does not know what to seek demonstration for and what not; for not all things can be demonstrated. If all things were demonstrable, then, since a thing is not demonstrated through itself but through something else, demonstrations would either be circular (although this cannot be true, because then the same thing would be both better known and less well known, as is clear from Book I of the

Posterior Analytics [I, 2, 72 a 30; 3, 72 b 5 ff.]), or they would have to proceed to infinity. But if there were an infinite regress in demonstrations, demonstration would be impossible, because the conclusion of any demonstration is made certain by reducing it to the first principle of demonstration. But this would not be the case if demonstration proceeded to infinity. It is clear, then, that not all things are demonstrable. And if some things are not demonstrable, these men cannot say that any principle is more indemonstrable than the above-mentioned one.

608. Aristotle then shows that the above-mentioned principle can be demonstrated in a certain respect. He says that it may be demonstrated by disproof. In Greek the word is **ÈXc/ktikus**, which is better translated by *refutation,* for an ÈAeyx°« is a syllogism that establishes the contradictory of a proposition, and so is introduced to refute some false position. And on these grounds it can be shown that it is impossible for the same thing both to be and not be. But this kind of argument can be employed only if the one who denies that principle because of some doubt or other "says something," i.e. if he signifies something by a word. But if he says nothing, it is ridiculous to look for a reason against one who does not make use of reason in speaking; for in this dispute anyone who signifies nothing will be like a plant, since even brute animals signify something by certain signs.

V. PRINCIPAL MODES OF BEING

(In V *Metaph.* lect. 9, nos. 885-886, 889-892, 895-897)

Aristotle sets forth the principal modes of being on numerous occasions. The classification presented in the above reference is notable for its completeness and preciseness. Being is first of all divided into essential being (ens *per se)* and accidental being (ens *per accidens),* the latter of which is not to be confused with predicamental accident. Essential being, in turn, bears the following subdivisions:

i) the predicaments or categories, 2) the being which signifies the truth of a proposition (ens verum), and 3) the being of act and potency. Only predicamental being, however, and the being of act and potency are real; hence only these, properly speaking, pertain to the object of metaphysics. Accidental being, which has no proper cause, and being as the truth of a proposition (hence as existing in the mind only) do not, in all strictness, come under its object.

A. EssenizuZ *being and accidental being* (ens per se, ens per accidens)

885. Aristotle observes that things are said to be both essentially and accidentally. It should be noted, however, that this division of being is not the same as that whereby being is divided into substance and accident. This is clear from the fact that he later divides essential being into the ten predicaments, nine of which belong to the class of accident [no. 880]. Hence being is divided into substance and accident in so far as it is considered in an absolute sense; for example, whiteness considered in itself is called an accident, and man a substance. But accidental being, in the sense in which it is taken here, must be understood by comparing an accident with a substance; and this comparison is signified by the term *is* when, for example, it is said that the man is white. Hence this totality, "the man is white," is an accidental being. It is clear, then, that the division of being into essential being and accidental being is based on the fact that one thing is predicated of another either essentially or accidentally. But the division of being into substance and accident is based on the fact that a thing is in its own nature either a substance or an accident.

886. Aristotle then states the various senses in which a thing is said to be accidentally. He says that this occurs in three ways: first, when an accident is predicated of an accident, as when it

is said that someone just is musical; second, when an accident is predicated of a subject, as when it is said that the man is musical; and third, when a subject is predicated of an accident, as when it is said that the musician is a man. . ..

B. *The modes of essential being* (ens per se)

a) Division, *by the ten predicaments, of being which lies outside the mind* (no. 889). Aristotle explains here that all those things which signify the figures of predication are said to be essentially. For it must be noted that being cannot be narrowed down to some definite thing in the way in which a genus is narrowed down to a species by means of differences. For since a difference does not participate in a genus, it lies outside the essence of a genus. But there could be nothing outside the essence of being which could constitute a particular species of being by adding to being; for what is outside of being is nothing, and this cannot be a difference. Hence in Book III of this work [B, 3, 998 b 23 ff.] the Philosopher proved that being cannot be a genus.

890. Being must then be narrowed down to diverse genera on the basis of a different mode of predication, which flows from a different mode of being; for "being is signified," i.e. something is signified to be "in just as many ways" (or in as many senses) as we can make predications. And for this reason the classes into which being is first divided are called predicaments, because they are distinguished on the basis of different ways of predicating. Therefore, since some predicates signify "what" (i.e. substance), some, "of what kind" (quality), some, "how much" (quantity), and so on, there must then be a mode of being corresponding to each type of predication. For example, when it is said that a man is an animal, *is* signifies substance; and when it is said that a man is white, *is* signifies quality; and so on.

891-892. *Text relative to the division into ten predicaments* [Cf. *supra,* p. 170t., for the text.]

b) *Being which signifies the composition of a proposition* (no. 895). Aristotle then gives another sense in which the term being is used, according as "being" and "is" signify the composition of a proposition, which the intellect makes when it combines and separates. Hence he says that being signifies the truth of a thing, or as another translation better expresses it, being signifies that some statement is true. Tirus the truth of a thing can be said to determine the truth of a proposition after the manner of a cause; for by reason of the fact that a thing is or is not, an assertion *[oratio] is* true or false. . . .

896. Now it must be noted that this second way in which being is used is related to the first as an effect is to a cause. For from the fact that something is in reality it follows that there is truth and falsity in a proposition, and the intellect signifies this by the term *is,* taken as a verb copula. But since the intellect considers as a kind of being something which in itself is a nonbeing, such as a negation and the like, therefore sometimes being is predicated of something in this second way and not in the first. For blindness is said to be in the second way on the grounds that the proposition in which something is said to be blind is true. However, it is not said to be true in the first way; for blindness does not have any being in reality but is rather a privation of some being. Now it is accidental to a thing that an attribute should be affirmed of it truly in thought or in word, for reality is not referred to knowledge but the reverse. But the act of being which each thing has in its own nature is substantial; and therefore when it is said that Socrates is, if the *is* be taken in the first way, it belongs to the class of substantial predicates; for being is a higher predicate with reference to any particular being, as animal with reference to man. But if it be taken in the second way [as verb ccr ala], it belongs to the class of accidental predicates.

c) *Division of being into act and potency* (no. 897). Aristotle

then gives the division of being into the actual and the potential. He says that to be and being signify something which is expressible or utterable potentially or actually. For in the case of all the foregoing terms which signify the ten predicaments, something is said to be actually and something potentially; and from this it follows that each predicament is divided by actuality and potentiality. And just as in the case of things which are outside the mind some are said to be actually and some potentially, so also is this true in the case of the mind's activities, and in that of privations, which are only conceptual beings. For one is said to know both because he is capable of using scientific knowledge and because he is using it; and similarly a thing is said to be at rest both because rest belongs to it already and because it is capable of being at rest. And this is true not only of accidents but also of substances. For "Mercury," we say, i.e. the image of Mercury is present potentially in the stone; and half of a line is present potentially in a line, for every part of a continuum is potentially in the whole. And line is included in the class of substances according to the opinion of those who hold that the objects of mathematics are substances—an opinion which he has not yet disproved. Also grain, when it is not yet ripe, as when it is still in blade, is said to be potentially. Just when, however, something is potential and when it is no longer such, this is established elsewhere, namely, in Book IX of this work [®, 7,1048 b 35 ft.]

VI. METAPHYSICS AS THE SCIENCE OF SUBSTANCE

(In VII *Metaph.* lect. 1, nos. 1248-1255, 1257-1259)

Having eliminated (in Book E) from the object of metaphysics both accidental being (ens *per accidens),* which has not a determinate cause, and being as truth, which exists as

such in the intellect only, Aristotle turns his attention to the study of essential being (ens *per se~).* His first division here is, as we have seen (Text V), that of the ten predicaments. For all practical purposes, however, the study of metaphysics is, for him, the study of substance. At the beginning of Book Z Aristotle explains why it must be so, and in the course of the discussion gives some interesting clarifications on substance and accidents, and the relation of these two modes of being to each other. Special notice should be given that in this context, as for that matter in many others, the designations *quid, quale,* and *quantum* have a meaning that is both technical and precise, "quid" corresponding to substance, "quale" to quality, and "quantum" to quantity. (Collate with *supra,* "Substance," p. 154).

A. *Substance is first being*

1248. In proof of this contention Aristotle argues as follows. In every class of things that which exists of itself and is a being in an unqualified sense is prior to that which exists by reason of something else and is a being in a qualified sense. But substance is a being in an unqualified sense and exists of itself *[per se],* whereas all classes of beings other than substance are beings in a qualified sense and exist by reason of substance. Therefore substance is the primary kind of being.

1249. Aristotle then elucidates the minor premise, in two ways. First, by considering the way in which we speak, or make predications. It is evident, he says, that substance is the primary kind of being from the fact that when we state of what sort a thing is we say that it is either good or evil; for this signifies quality, which differs from substance and quantity. Three cubits long, however, signifies quantity, and man signifies substance. Therefore when we state of what sort a thing is, we do not say

that it is three cubits long or a man. And when we state what a thing is, we do not say that it is white or hot, which signify quality, or three cubits long, which signifies quantity, but we say that it is a man or a god, which signifies substance.

1250. From this it is clear that terms signifying substance express what a thing is in an unqualified sense, whereas those signifying quality do not express what a thing is in an unqualified sense, but what sort of thing it is. The same is true of quantity and the other genera.

1251. And thus it is also clear that substance itself is said to be a being of itself *[ratione suiipsius],* because terms which simply signify substance designate what this thing is. But other classes of things are said to be beings, not because they have a quiddity of themselves (as though they were beings of themselves, since they do not express what a thing is an an unqualified sense), but because "they belong to such a being," i.e. because they have some connection with substance, which is a being of itself. For they do not signify quiddity, since some of them are clearly qualities of such a being, i.e. of substance, others quantities, others affections, or something of the sort signified by the other genera.

1252-1255. *Proof by an example.*

B. In what respects substance is first being,

1257. Here Aristotle shows in what respects substance is said to be first. Since the term *first* is used in several senses, as has been explained in Book V [A, 11, 1018 b 10 ff.], substance is of all beings the first in three respects: in the order of knowing, in definition, and in time. He proves that it is first in time by this argument: none of the other predicaments is capable of existing apart from substance, but substance alone is capable of existing apart from the others; for no accident is found without a sub-

stance, but some substance is found without an accident. Thus it is clear that an accident does not exist whenever a substance does, but the reverse is true; and for this reason substance is prior in time.

1258. It is also evident that it is first in definition, because in the definition of any accident it is necessary to include the definition of substance; for just as nose is given in the definition of snub, so too the proper subject of any accident is given in the definition of that accident. Hence just as animal is prior to man in definition, because the definition of animal is given in that of man, in a similar fashion substance is prior to accidents in definition.

1259. It is evident, too, that substance is first in the order of knowing, for that is first in the order of knowing which is better known and explains a thing better. Now each thing is better known when its substance is known than when its quality or quantity is known; for we think we know each thing best when we know what it is, a man (say) or fire, rather than when we know of what sort it is or how much it is or where it is or when we know it according to any of the other categories. For this reason too we think that we know each of the things contained in the predicaments of accidents when we know what each is; for example, when we know what being "this sort" of thing is we know quality; and when we know what being "how much" is we know quantity. For just as the other predicaments have being only in so far as they inhere in a substance, in a similar way they can be known only in so far as they share to some extent in the mode according to which substance is known, and this is to know the whatness of a thing.

VII. POTENCY AND ACT

All of Book © (Book IX, in the Commentary of St. Thomas) is given to act and potency, the second of the three

main divisions under essential being (ens *per se*). True, the division of being by act and potency had already been introduced in the *Physics,* to serve in the definition of motion, a limited application of the division. In the *Metaphysics,* on the other hand, act and potency are studied in their universality, i.e. as pertaining, one or both, to all beings, to those which are immobile (unchanging) as well as to those which are subject to motion (change of any kind). The portions from the Commentary which follow are basic to the division in question; in them St. Thomas spells out the meaning of act and potency and declares their principal modes. Worth noting is the procedure by inductive analogy. It is almost always by this procedure, and not by abstract analysis, that Aristotle arrives at his definitions; and the same is to be said for his disciple St. Thomas. (Collate with *supra,* chapter 6, "Act and Potency," p. 183).

A. *Explication of potency*

(In IX Metaph. lect. 1, nos. 1773-1780)

1773. Aristotle then says it has been shown elsewhere, i.e. in Book V of this work [A, 12], that "potency" and "to be able" have a multiplicity of meaning. But in some cases this multiplicity is a multiplicity of equivocation, and in others it is a multiplicity of analogy. For some things are said to be capable or incapable *[possibilia vel impossibilia]* because they have some principle within themselves, and this refers to those senses in which all potencies are said to be potencies not equivocally but analogously. But other things are not said to be capable or able because of some principle which they have within themselves; and in their case the term potency is used equivocally.

1774. Therefore, with regard to those senses in which the term potency is used equivocally, he says that these must be dismissed for the present. For the term potency is referred to some things, not because of some principle which they have, but in a figurative sense, as is done in geometry; for the square of a line is called its power *[potentia],* and a line is said to be capable of becoming its square. . . .

1775. [The figurative meaning of potency in logic]

1776. Passing over these senses of potency, then, we must consider those potencies which are reduced to one species, because each of these is a principle. And all potencies spoken of in this sense are reduced to some principle from which all the others derive their meaning; and this is an active principle, which is the source of change in some other thing in so far as it is other. He says this because it is possible for an active principle to be at the same time in the mobile or patient, as when something moves itself; however, it is not mover and moved, or agent and patient, in the same respect. Hence the principle designated as active potency is said to be a principle of change in some other thing in so far as it is other; for, even though an active principle can be found in the same thing as a passive principle, this still does not happen in so far as it is the same, but in so far as it is other.

1777. That the other potencies are reduced to this principle which is called active potency is evident; for in one sense passive potency means the principle by which one thing is moved by some other thing in so far as it is other. He says this because, even if the same thing might be acted upon by itself, this does not happen in so far as it is the same, but in so far as it is other. Now this potency is reduced to a first active potency, because when anything undergoes change this is caused by an agent. . . .

1778. In another sense potency means a certain state of insusceptibility *[habitus impassibilitatis]* "to change for the

worse," i.e. a disposition whereby a thing is such that it cannot undergo change for the worse; which is to say it cannot undergo corruption as a result of some other thing "in so far as it is other," namely, by a principle of change which is an active principle.

1779. Now it is evident that both of these senses of potency imply something within us which is referred to the undergoing of a change. For in the one sense the term designates a principle by reason of which someone cannot be acted upon; and in the other sense it designates a principle by reason of which someone can be acted upon. Hence, since the state of being acted upon depends on action, the definition "of the primary kind of potency," namely active potency, must be given in the definition of both senses of potency. Thus these two potencies are reduced to the first, i.e. to active potency, as to something prior.

1780. Again, in another sense potencies are spoken of not only in relation to acting and being acted upon but in relation to what is done well in both instances. For example, we say that someone is capable of walking, not because he can walk in any way at all, but because he can walk well; and in an opposite sense we say of one who limps that he cannot walk. Similarly, we say that wood is capable of being burned because it can be burned easily; but we say that green wood is incapable of being burned because it cannot be burned easily. Hence it is clear that in the definitions of those potencies which are described as potencies for acting and being acted upon well, there are included the concepts of those primary potencies which were described as potencies for acting and being acted upon without qualification; for example, *to act* is included in to *act well,* and to *be acted upon* is included in *to be acted upon well.* Hence it is obvious that all of these senses of potency are reduced to one primary sense, namely to active potency; and therefore it is also evident that this multiplicity is not a multiplicity of equivocation but of analogy.

B. Explication of act

(In IX Metaph. lect. 5, nos. 1825-1831)

1825. Aristotle then shows what actuality (or act) is. He says that a thing is actual when it exists but not in the way it exists when it is potential. For we say that the image of Mercury is in the wood potentially and not actually before the wood is carved; but once it has been carved the image of Mercury is then said to be in the wood actually. And in the same way we say that any part of a continuous whole is in that whole, because any part (for example, the middle one) is present potentially inasmuch as it is possible for it to be separated from the whole by dividing the whole; but after the whole has been divided, that part will then be present actually. The same thing is true of one who has a science and is not speculating, for he is capable of speculating even when he is not doing so; but to be speculating or contemplating is to be in a state of actuality.

1826. And here he answers an implied question: for someone could ask him to explain what actuality is by giving its definition. Aristotle answers that it is possible to show what we mean by actuality inductively, i.e. by adducing individual examples, "and we should not look for the boundaries of everything," i.e. the definition. For the first simple notions cannot be defined, since an infinite regress in definitions is impossible. But actuality is one of those first simple notions. Hence it cannot be defined.

1827. But we can see, he says, what actuality is by means of the proportion existing between two things. For example, we may take the proportion of one who is building to one capable of building; and of one who is awake to one asleep; and of one who sees to one whose eyes are closed although he has the power of sight; and "of that which is separated out of matter," i.e. of what is formed by means of the operation of art or of nature and thus is separated out of unformed matter, to what is not sepa-

rated out of unformed matter. And similarly we may take the proportion of what has been prepared to what has not been prepared, or of what has been worked on to what has not been worked on. But in each of these opposed pairs one member will be actual and the other potential. And thus by proceeding from particular cases we can come to an understanding, in a proportional way, of what actuality and potentiality are.

1828. Aristotle then shows that the term actuality is used in different senses; and he gives two different senses in which it is used, a) First, actuality means action, or operation. And with a view to introducing the different senses of actuality he says, first, that we do not say that all things are actual in the same way but in different ways; and this difference can be considered according to different proportions. For a proportion can be taken as meaning that just as one thing is in another, so a third is in a fourth; for example, just as sight is in the eye, so hearing is in the ear. And the relation of substance (i.e. form) to matter is taken according to this kind of proportion; for form is said to be in matter.

1829. There is another meaning of proportion inasmuch as we say that, just as this is related to that, so another thing is related to something else; for example, just as the power of sight is related to the act of seeing, so the power of hearing is related to the act of hearing. And the relation of motion to motive power or of any operation to an operative potency is taken according to this kind of proportion.

1830. b) Secondly, he gives the other sense in which the word actuality is used. He says that the infinite and the empty or the void, and all things of this kind, are said to exist potentially and actually in a different sense from many other beings; for example, what sees and what walks and what is visible. For it pertains to things of this kind that they sometimes exist in an unqualified sense either only potentially or only actually; for

example, the visible is only actual when it is seen, and it is only potential when it is capable of being seen but is not being seen.

1831. But the infinite is not said to exist potentially in the sense that it may sometimes have separate actual existence alone; rather, actuality and potentiality in the infinite are distinguished only in thought and in knowledge. For example, in the case of the infinite in the sense of the infinitely divisible, actuality and potentiality are said to exist at the same time, because the capacity of the infinite for being divided never comes to an end; for when it is actually divided it is still potentially further divisible. However, it is never actually separated from potentiality in such a way that the whole is sometimes actually divided and is incapable of any further division. And the same thing is true of the void; for it is possible for a place to be emptied of a particular body, but not so as to be a complete void, for it continues to be filled by another body; and thus in the void potentiality always continues to be joined to actuality. The same is also true of motion and time and other things of this kind which do not have complete being.

VIII. GOD IS LIFE

(In XII *Metaph.* lect. 8, no. 2544)

Book Λ marks the climax of the *Metaphysics*. To the question, his own, whether there are separate substances, Aristotle replies by establishing the existence of a first unmoved mover, whose nature he then proceeds to expound. St. Thomas, to be sure, when pursuing the subject of God on his own, betters Aristotle by far, and thus we do not go to the Commentary on the *Metaphysics* for his clearest and closest presentations to the purpose. Just the same, Aristotle's insights in the matter will have been truly profound and penetrating, as witness his remarks concerning God's

life, here cited through the Commentary of St. Thomas. And with the following passage we come to the last of our excerpts from Aristotle the metaphysician as seen through the eyes of his pre-eminent disciple.

2544. Aristotle says that God is life itself, and proves it as follows. "Intellectual activity," i.e. understanding *[intelligere]* is a kind of life; and it is the most perfect kind of life that there is. For according to what has been shown, actuality is more perfect than potentiality; and therefore an intellect which is actually understanding leads a more perfect life than one which is potentially understanding, just as being awake is more perfect than being asleep. But the first being, God, is actuality itself; for His intellect is His intellectual activity; otherwise He would be related to His intellectual activity as potentiality to actuality. Moreover, it has been shown that His substance is actuality. Thus it follows that the very substance of God is life; and that His actuality is His life, and that it is the life which is best and eternal and subsists of itself. This is why the popular opinion holds that God is an animal which is eternal and best; for around us life is clearly apparent only in animals, and therefore God is called an animal because life belongs to Him. Hence, from what has been said it is evident that life and continuous and eternal duration belong to God, because God is identical with His own eternal life; for He and His life are not different.

IX. ONE AS PRINCIPLE OF NUMBER AND ONE AS TRANSCENDENTAL

(De *Potentia,* q.9, a.7)

In the *Quaestiones Disputatae* of St. Thomas there are several presentations, all of them more or less ample and incisive, concerning the transcendentals. One such passage (De *Verit.* q.i, a.i) we had occasion to paraphrase in the

fore part of our study (cf. *supra,* p. 124 f). In this pre-eminent text the doctrine of transcendentals is treated in its entirety. Given below, on the other hand, is an excerpt from De *Potentia,* also made use of earlier (cf. *supra,* p. 129); what it presents is St. Thomas' concluding remarks on the meaning, the twofold meaning of the notion *one.* St. Thomas, it will be seen, is above all concerned with dispelling the confusion that comes about by not distinguishing between one as principle of number and one as transcendental. (Collate with *supra,* "The Transcendentals in Particular," p. 128).

Accordingly, the above opinions were based on the supposition that the *one* which is convertible with *being* is the same with that which is the principle of number, and that there is no plurality but number that is a species of quantity. Now this is clearly false. For since division causes plurality and indivision unity, we must judge of *one* and *many* according to the various kinds of division. Now there is a kind of division which altogether transcends the genus of quantity, and this is division according to formal opposition which has nothing to do with quantity. Hence the plurality resulting from such a division, and the unity which excludes such a division, must needs be more universal and comprehensive than the genus of quantity.

Again there is a division of quantity which does not transcend the genus of quantity. Wherefore the plurality consequent to this division and the unity which excludes it are in the genus of quantity. This latter unity is an accidental addition to the thing of which it is predicated, in that it measures it: otherwise the number arising from this unity would not be an accident nor the species of a genus. Whereas the unity that is convertible with being adds nothing to being except the negation of division; not that it signifies indivision only, but substance with indivision: for *one* is the same as individual being. In like manner the

plurality that corresponds to this unity adds nothing to the *many things* except distinction, which consists in each one not being the other: and this they have not from anything added to them but from their proper forms.

It is clear, then, that *one* which is convertible with *being* posits *being* but adds nothing except the negation of division. And the *number* corresponding to it adds this to the things described as *many,* that each of them is *one,* and that each of them is not the other, wherein is the essence of distinction. Accordingly then, while *one* adds to *being* one negation inasmuch as a thing is undivided in itself; *plurality* adds two negations, inasmuch as a certain thing is undivided in itself, and inasmuch as distinct from another; i.e. one of them is not the other. (From *On the Power of God,* trans, by Laurence Chapeóte, O.P. Reprinted by permission of Tire Newman Press, Publishers.)

X. LOGICAL TRUTH AND ONTOLOGICAL TRUTH

(*Summa theol.* la, q. 16, a. 1 c)

Is truth in the intellect? Or is it in things? Aristotle's view was that it is primarily in the intellect. The Augustinian tradition took more to the view of an objective or ontological truth. In St. Thomas both positions are recognized. Truth, he agrees with Aristotle, is primarily in the intellect, but secondarily or derivatively it is also in things. Our excerpt, from the *Summa theologiae,* shows how he goes about reconciling the two points of view. (Collate with *supra,* "The True," p. 134).

As *good* names that towards which the appetite tends, so *the true* names that towards which the intellect tends. Now there is this difference between the appetite and the intellect, or any

knowledge whatsoever, that knowledge is according as the thing known is in the knower, while appetite is according as the desirer tends towards the thing desired. Thus the term of the appetite, namely good, is in the desirable thing, and the term of the intellect, namely the true, is in the intellect itself.

Now as good exists in a thing so far as that thing is related to the appetite—and hence the aspect of goodness passes on from the desirable thing to the appetite, in so far as the appetite is called good if its object is good; so, since the true is in the intellect in so far as the intellect is conformed to the thing understood, the aspect of the true must needs pass from the intellect to the thing understood, so that also the thing understood is said to be true in so far as it has some relation to the intellect.

Now a thing understood may be in relation to an intellect either essentially or accidentally. It is related essentially to an intellect on which it depends as regards its being, but accidentally to an intellect by which it is knowable; even as we may say that a house is related essentially to the intellect of the architect, but accidentally to the intellect upon which it does not depend. Now we do not judge of a thing by what is in it accidentally, but by what is in it essentially. Hence, everything is said to be true absolutely, in so far as it is related to the intellect on which it depends; and thus it is that artificial things are said to be true as being related to our intellect. For a house is said to be true that fulfills the likeness of the form in the architect's mind; and words are said to be true so far as they are the signs of truth in the intellect. In the same way, natural things are said to be true in so far as they express the likeness of the species that are in the divine mind. For a stone is called true which possesses the nature proper to a stone, according to the preconception in the divine intellect. Thus, then, truth resides primarily in the intellect, and secondarily in things according as they are related to the intellect as their source. (From *Basic*

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XI. WHETHER GOOD ADDS ANYTHING TO BEING

(De Verit. q. 21, a.l)

The question which always seems uppermost in the mind of St. Thomas when dealing with the transcendentals is whether they add anything positive and real to being, or differ from it only in concept. In the present selection the question is treated with exceptional thoroughness. The elucidations and resolutions set forth serve at the same time to illuminate the general doctrine of transcendentals and even, to some extent, the basic divisions of being—circumstances which lend the more interest to the piece. (Collate with *supra,* "The Good," p. 142).

Something can be added to something else in three ways:

1) It adds some reality which is outside the essence of the thing to which it is said to be added. For instance, white adds something to body, since the essence of whiteness is something beyond that of body.

2) One thing is added to the other as limiting and determining it. Man, for instance, adds something to animal—not indeed in such a way that there is in man some reality which is completely outside the essence of animal; otherwise it would be necessary to say that it is not the whole of man which is animal but only a part. Animal is limited by man because what is contained in the notion of man determinately and actually, is only implicitly and, as it were, potentially contained in the notion of animal. It belongs to the notion of man that he have a ra-

tional soul; to the notion of anima], that it have a soul, without its being determined to rational or nonrational. And yet that determination by reason of which man is said to add something to animal is founded in reality.

3) Something is said to add to something else in concept only. This occurs when something which is nothing in reality but only in thought, belongs to the notion of one thing and not to the notion of the other, whether that to which it is said to be added is limited by it or not. Thus *blind* adds something to man, namely blindness, which is not a being in nature but merely a being in the thought of one who knows privations. By it man is limited, for not every man is blind. But when we say "a blind mole," no limitation is placed by what is added.

It is not possible, however, for something to add anything to being in general in the first way, though in that way there can be an addition to some particular kind of being; for there is no real being which is outside the essence of being in general, though some reality may be outside the essence of *this* being. But in the second way certain things are found to add to being, since being is contracted by the ten categories, each of which adds something to being—not, of course, an accident or difference which is outside the essence of being, but a definite manner of being which is founded upon the very essence [Schmidt: *existence]* of the thing. It is not in this way, however, that good adds something to being, since good itself, like being, is divided into the ten categories, as is made clear in the *Ethics* [I, 6, 1096 a 19-30].

Good must, accordingly, either add nothing to being or add something merely in concept. For if it added something real, being would have to be contracted by the character of good to a special genus. But since being is what is first conceived by the intellect, as Avicenna says *[Metaph.* I, 6, 72rb], every other noun must either be a synonym of being or add something at

least conceptually. The former cannot be said of good, since it is not mere babble to call a being good. Thus good, by the fact of its not limiting being, must add to it something merely conceptual. . . . Accordingly, to being, the first conception of the intellect, *one* adds what is merely conceptual—a negation; for it means undivided being. As for *true* and *good,* which are predicated positively, these too cannot add anything except a relation which is merely conceptual. (From *Truth,* Vol. III, Translated by Robert W. Schmidt, S.J., Copyright Henry Regnery Company, 1954. Reprinted by permission of Henry Regnery Company, Publishers.)

XII. CONCERNING BEING AND ESSENCE

St. Thomas was not the first to reduce being to essence and existence, a reduction, as it were, to its ultimate components. Several earlier commentators of Aristotle had spoken in much the same terms, though their meaning often left much to be desired. The fact of the matter is that with St. Thomas the doctrine of essence and existence finds a development it had not known before. His first full-scale presentation occurs in *De Ente et Essentia,* written at the beginning of his teaching career. His intent in this comparatively small work is far from simple. But, disregarding the parts which are more properly expositions in logic, we may say that the metaphysical content establishes a hierarchical classification of beings on the basis of increasing simplicity, going from material substances (composed of matter and form) to spiritual substances (composed only of essence and existence), and culminating in God (absolutely simple, in whom essence is identical with existence). Moreover, despite certain peculiarities, mostly of style, which betray the precocious author, De *Ente et Essentia* is already

completely representative of the teaching which St. Thomas was to maintain on the subject throughout his career. (Collate with *supra,* chapter 7, "Essence and Existence/' p. 201).

A. *On the meaning of the words "being" and "essence"*

(De Ente et Essentia, Introduction & chap. 1)

A small mistake in the beginning is a great one in the end, according to the Philosopher in the first book of *De Caelo et Mundo* [I, 5, 271 b 13]. Moreover, as Avicenna declares early in his *Metaphysics* [I, 6, 72rb], what the intellect first conceives is being and essence. Consequently, lest we fall into error through ignorance of them, we ought to state, with a view to disclosing the difficulty they involve: 1) what is meant by the terms *being* and *essence;* 2) how they are found in diverse things; and 3) how they are related to the intentions of logic, namely genus, species, and difference. Moreover, we ought to acquire knowledge of the simple from the composite, and arrive at what is prior from what is posterior, so that beginning with easier matters, we may advance more suitably in knowledge. For this reason we ought to go from the meaning of being to the meaning of essence.

It should be known, then, that being by itself *[per se]* is spoken of in two ways, as the Philosopher says in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* [A, 7, 1017 a 22-35]. hi the first way it is divided into the ten categories; in the second way it signifies the truth of propositions. The difference between the two is that in the second sense we can call everything being about which we can form an affirmative proposition, even though it may posit nothing in reality. Thus, we call even privations and negations beings, for we say that affirmation *is* opposed to negation, and that blindness *is* in the eye. But in the first sense, only that can

be called being which posits something in reality. In this sense, then, blindness and the like are not beings.

Accordingly, the term *essence* is not taken from being in the second sense of the word. For, as is clear in the case of privations, in that sense we call some things beings which do not have an essence. Essence is rather taken from being in the first sense. That is the reason why the Commentator declares in the same place [In V *Metaph.* 7, t. c. 14; 55v-aj6] that being in the first sense of the word is that which signifies the essence of a thing. And because, as we have said, being in this sense is divided into the ten categories, essence must signify something common to all natures through which different beings are placed in different genera and species. For example, humanity is the essence of man, and so with other things. Moreover, since that by which a thing is constituted in its proper genus and species is what is signified by the definition expressing what the thing is, philosophers have taken to using the word *quiddity* for the word *essence.* The Philosopher frequently calls this the *what a thing was to be [quod quid erat* esse], in other words, that by which a thing is a *what.*

B. Essence in composite substances

(De *Ente et Essentia,* chap. 2)

Form and matter are found in composite substances, for example, soul and body in man. It cannot be said, however, that either one of these alone is called the essence. That matter alone is not the essence of a thing is evident, for through its essence a thing is knowable and fixed in its species and genus. But matter is not a principle of knowledge, nor does it determine anything to a genus or species. Only that which is in act does this. Neither can the form alone of a composite substance be called its essence, although some would endeavor to assert it. For it is evi-

dent from what has been said that essence is what the definition of a thing signifies. Now, the definition of physical substances includes not only form but also matter; otherwise there would be no difference between physical and mathematical definitions. Neither can it be said that the definition of a physical substance includes matter as something added to its essence, or as a being outside of its essence, because this manner of definition is more proper to accidents, which do not have a perfect essence. That is the reason why the definition of accidents must include their subject, which is outside their genus. Evidently, then, essence embraces both matter and form.

We cannot say, however, that essence signifies the relation existing between matter and form, or something added to them. This would of necessity be accidental or extraneous to the thing, and it would not enable us to know the thing: none of which characteristics fits essence. For, through form, which is the actuality of matter, matter is rendered being in act and a substance *[hoc aliquid].* What is added to it later, then, does not make matter to be actual without qualification, but to be actually *such,* as accidents likewise do. Whiteness, for instance, makes a being actually white. Accordingly, when such a form is acquired, we do not say something comes into being absolutely, but in a certain respect *[non simpliciter, sed secundum quid].* It remains, then, that the word *essence* in composite substance signifies the composite of matter and form.

C. *Essence in separate substances*

(De Ente et Essentia, chap. 4)

It remains for us to see in what way essence is in separated substances, namely in the soul, in the intelligences, and in the First Cause. Although everyone admits the simplicity of the First Cause, some try to introduce the composition of matter

and form in the intelligences and in souls. The originator of this doctrine seems to have been Avicebron, the author of the *Forts Vitae*. But it is not in accord with what philosophers generally say, since they call these substances separated from matter, and they prove that they are entirely immaterial.

The best demonstration of this is from their power of understanding. We see that forms are not actually intelligible unless they are separated from matter and material conditions; nor are they rendered actually intelligible except through the power of an intelligent substance which receives them within itself and actualizes them. Every intelligent substance, then, must be in every way free from matter, neither having matter as part of itself, nor being, like material forms, a form impressed on matter. Nor can it be asserted that not any matter whatsoever, but only corporeal matter stands in the way of intelligibility. If corporeal matter alone stood in the way of intelligibility, then matter must impede intelligibility because of its corporeal form, since matter is called corporeal only when it exists under a corporeal form. But this is impossible, because a corporeal form itself, like other forms, is actually intelligible when abstracted from matter.

It follows that there is no composition of matter and form in a soul or an intelligence, so that essence in these substances would be like essence in corporeal substances. But there is in them the composition of form and the act of existing [esse], Tirus, in the commentary on the ninth proposition of the *Liber de Causis* it is said that an intelligence is a being having form and the act of existing; and form is understood here as the essence itself or the simple nature.

It is easy to see how this is so. Whatever things are so related to each other that one is the cause of the other's existing, the one which is the cause can exist without the other, but not conversely. Now, we find the relation of matter and form such that

form makes matter exist. It is thus impossible that matter exist without some form. On the other hand, it is not impossible that some form exist without matter, for form as such does not depend on matter. If we find some forms which can exist only in matter, this happens to them because they are far removed from the First Principle, which is primary and pure act. So, those forms closest to the First Principle subsist in virtue of themselves without matter. For, as we have said, not every kind of form requires matter, and the intelligences are forms of this kind. It is not necessary, then, that the essences or quiddities of these substances be other than form itself.

Although substances of this kind are forms only, and without matter, they are not in every way simple, so as to be pure act. They do have an admixture of potency, which is evident from the following consideration. Whatever does not belong to the notion of essence or quiddity comes from without and enters into composition with the essence, for no essence is intelligible without its essential parts. Now, every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being known of its existence. I can know what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it exists in reality. From this it is clear that the act of existing is other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there be a being whose quiddity is its very act of existing [esse]. And there can be only one such being, the First Being. For nothing can be multiplied except: 1) through the addition of some difference, as the generic nature is multiplied into species; or 2) by the form being received in different parts of matter, as the specific nature is multiplied in different individuals; or 3) by one thing being separate and another thing being received in something—for instance, if there were a separated heat, by reason of its very separation it would be different from heat which is not separated. But, should there exist some being which

is simply the act of existing, so that the act of existing be itself subsistent, a difference cannot be added to this act of existing, because then it would not be purely and simply the act of existing, but the act of existing plus a certain form. Much less can matter be added to it, because then it would not be a subsistent, but a material, act of existing. So we conclude that there can only be one such being which is its very act of existing. With this exception, in every other thing its act of existing is other than its quiddity, nature, or form. In the pure intelligences, therefore, the act of existing must be in addition to their form, and for this reason it has been said that an intelligence is form and the act of existing.

Now, whatever belongs to a being is either caused by the principles of its nature, as the capability of laughter in man, or it comes to it from some extrinsic principle, as light in the air from the sun's influence. But it is impossible that the act of existing be caused by a thing's form or its quiddity (I say *caused* as by an efficient cause); for then something would be the cause of itself and would bring itself into existence—which is impossible. Everything, then, which is such that its act of existing is other than its nature must needs have its act of existing from something else. And since every being which exists through another is reduced, as to its first cause, to one existing in virtue of itself, there must be some being which is the cause of the existing of all things because it itself is the act of existing alone. If that were not so, we would proceed to infinity among causes, since, as we have said, every being which is not the act of existing alone has a cause of its existence. Clearly, then, an intelligence is form and act of existing, and it has its act of existing from the First Being, which is simply act of existing. This is the First Cause, God.

Now, every being receiving something from another is potential with respect to what it receives, and what is received in it is

its act. The quiddity itself, then, or the form which is the intelligence must be potential with respect to the existence which it receives from God, and that existence [esse] is received as an act. Potency and act are thus found in the intelligences, but not form and matter, except in an equivocal sense. So, too, as the Commentator says in his exposition of the third book of De *Anima* [III, 2, t. c. 14, fol. róSvbq], *to suffer, to receive, to be a subject of,* and all characteristics of this sort which appear to belong to things by reason of matter, belong equivocally to intellectual and corporeal substances.

Furthermore, since the quiddity of an intelligence is, as we have said, the intelligence itself, its quiddity or essence is that which is, and the act of existing it receives from God is that whereby it is or subsists in the world of things. For this reason it is said by some that a substance of this kind is composed of "that by which it is" *[quo* est] and "that which it is" *[quod* est]; or, as Boethius says [De *Hebd. PL* 64, 1311C], of "that which is" *[quod* est] and its "act of existing" [esse]. Since, then, both potency and act are in the intelligences, finding multitude among them will not be difficult, whereas it would be impossible if there were no potency in them. Thus, the Commentator declares in his exposition of the third book of *De Anima* [III, 1, t. c. 5, fol. i66rai6] that, if we did not know the nature of the possible intellect, we could not find multitude among separated substances.

Accordingly, these substances are distinct from one another by reason of their degree of potency and act. A superior intelligence, closer to the First Being, has more act and less potency, and so with the others. This gradation terminates in the human soul, which holds the lowest place among intellectual substances. As the Commentator states in his exposition of the third book of *De Anima [ibid.* fol. i6ovb43], the possible intellect of the human soul bears the same relation to intelligible forms as prime

matter, holding the lowest position in sensible existence, bears to sensible forms. That is why the Philosopher compares it to a blank tablet on which nothing is written *[De Anima,* III, 4, 430 a 1]. Having more potency than the other intellectual substances, the human soul is so close to matter that a material thing is taken to share in its own act of existing, so that from soul and body there results in the one composite one act of existing, although in so far as it is the soul's act of existing it is not dependent on the body. After that form which is the soul, other forms are found, having still more potency and still closer to matter, to such a point that they do not exist without matter. Among these forms, too, we find an order and hierarchy, until we reach the primary forms of the elements, which are closest to matter. Being so close to matter, they operate only according to the exigencies of active and passive qualities and other dispositions which prepare matter to receive form.

D. Conclusion: Three ways essence is found in substances

(De Ente et Essentia, chap. 5)

It is evident from the foregoing how essence is found in different beings. Indeed, we find in substances a threefold manner of having essence.

1) First, there is a being, God, whose essence is His very act of existing. That explains why we find some philosophers asserting that God does not have a quiddity or essence, because His essence is not other than His act of existing. From this it follows that He is not in a genus, for the quiddity of anything in a genus must be other than its act of existing, since the different beings within a genus or species have the same generic or specific quiddity or nature, whereas their act of existing is different.

If we say, moreover, that God is purely and simply the act of existing, we need not fall into the mistake of those who assert that God is that universal existence whereby each thing formally exists. The act of existing which is God is such that no addition can be made to it. Consequently, in virtue of its very purity it is an act of existing distinct from every other, even as a separated color, if there were one, would by its very separation be distinct from a color that is not separated. That is why, in the commentary on the ninth proposition of the *Liber de Causis,* it is said that the First Cause, being purely and simply the act of existing, is individualized by its unalloyed perfection. But just as existing-in-general *[esse commune]* does not include in its notion any addition, so neither does it imply any exclusion of addition; otherwise, nothing could be understood to exist in which something would be added over and above the act of existing.

Similarly, although God is simply the act of existing, it is not necessary that He lack the other perfections or excellences. On the contrary, He possesses all perfections of all genera of beings; so He is said to be unqualifiedly perfect, as the Philosopher and the Commentator assert in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* [A, 16, 1021 b 30; *In* V *Metaph.* 16, t. c. 21, fol. 62310-13]. But He possesses these perfections in a more excellent way than other things, for in Him they are one, while in other things they are diversified. So, too, if someone through one quality could perform the operations of all the qualities, he would in that one quality possess all the qualities. In the same way, God possesses all perfections in His very act of existing.

2) In a second way, we find essence in created intellectual substances. Their act of existing is other than their essence, although their essence is immaterial. Thus, their act of existing is not a separated, but a received one; and it is therefore lim-

ited and restricted to the capacity of the receiving nature. Their nature or quiddity, however, is separated and unreceived in any matter. Thus the *Liber de Causis* states that the intelligences are unlimited from below and limited from above. They are limited as to their act of existing which they receive from above, but they are unlimited from below because their forms are not limited to the capacity of some matter receiving them.

Consequently, in these substances, as we have said, we do not find many individuals in one species, except in the case of the human soul because of the body to which it is united. Although the soul's individuation depends on the body for the occasion of its beginning, since the soul comes into possession of its individuated act of existing only in the body of which it is the act, it is not necessary that the individuation come to an end when the body is removed. Since its act of existing is independent, once it has acquired an individuated act of existing from its being made the form of this particular body, that act of existing always remains individuated. Hence, Avicenna states [*De Anima,* V, 3, fol. 24rb] that the individuation and multiplication of souls depend on the body in the beginning but not in the end.

What is more, because the quiddity in these substances is not identical with their act of existing, they are able to be placed in a category. So, we find in them genus, species, and difference, although their proper differences are hidden from us. But even in the case of sensible things the essential differences themselves are unknown to us; hence we have to signify them by the accidental differences which arise from the essential ones, as we designate a cause by its effect. *Biped,* for example, is given as the difference of man. With regard to immaterial substances, we do not know their proper accidents; hence we cannot designate their differences either in themselves or through their accidental differences.

3) We find essence in a third way in substances composed of matter and form. Their act of existing is received and limited because they have it from another; also, their nature or quiddity is received in designated matter. Thus they are limited both from above and from below. Moreover, because of the division of designated matter, the multiplication of individuals in one species is possible in such substances. . . . (From *On Being and Essence,* trans, by Armand A. Maurer, C. S. B. Copyright The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Publishers, 1949. Reprinted by permission of the Publishers.)

XIII. THAT IN GOD ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE ARE THE SAME

(Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 22)

Whereas in creatures essence and existence are really distinct, in God they are really one, identical. Indeed, the identity of God's essence with His existence is not only the hallowed expression of God's nature; it is also the ultimate solution to the problem of being. In the text we have chosen, St. Thomas develops his thought on this point more thoroughly than in the corresponding article of the *Summa theologiae* (la, q.3, a.4). In a preceding chapter (I, 18) he had declared that in God there is no composition whatever; and, more immediately (I, 21), that He is His very essence. Then follows the chapter which constitutes our present reading. (Collate with *supra,* chapter 7, "Essence and Existence," p. 201).

From what has been proved above, we can further prove that in God essence or quiddity is not something other than His being [esse: existence].

i) For it was shown above (ch. 13) that there is some being that must be through itself, and this is God. If, then, this being that must be belongs to an essence that is not that which it is, either it is incompatible with that essence or repugnant to it, as to exist through itself is repugnant to the quiddity of whiteness; or it is compatible with it or appropriate to it, as to be in another is to whiteness. If the first alternative be the case, the being that is through itself necessary will not befit that quiddity, just as it does not befit whiteness to exist through itself. If the second alternative be the case, either such being must depend on the essence, or both must depend on another cause, or the essence must depend on the being [esse]. Tire first two positions are contrary to the nature of that which is through itself a necessary being; for if it depends on another, it is no longer a necessary being. From the third position it follows that that quiddity is added accidentally to the thing that is through itself a necessary being; for what follows upon a thing's being is accidental to it and hence not its quiddity. God, therefore, does not have an essence that is not His being [esse].

But against this conclusion it can be objected that that being does not absolutely depend on that essence, so as not to be unless the essence existed; it depends, rather, on the essence as regards the union by which it is joined to it. Thus, that being is through itself necessary, but its union with the essence is not.

However, this reply does not escape the aforementioned difficulties. For, if that being can be understood without that essence, it will follow that the essence is related to that being in an accidental way. But that being is that which is through itself a necessary being. Therefore, that essence is related in an accidental way to that which is through itself a necessary being. It is, therefore, not its essence. But that which is through itself a necessary being is God. That essence, then, is not the essence of God, but some essence below God. On the other hand, if

that being cannot be understood without that essence, it depends absolutely on that on which its union to that essence depends. We then reach the same impasse as before.

2) Another argument. Each thing is through its own being. Hence, that which is not its own being is not through itself a necessary being. But God is through Himself a necessary being. He is, therefore, His own being.

3) Again, if God's being is not His essence, and cannot be part of that essence, since, as we have shown, the divine essence is simple [ch. 18], such a being must be something outside the divine essence. But whatever belongs to a thing and is yet not of its essence belongs to it through some cause; for, if things that are not through themselves one are joined, they must be joined through some cause. Being, therefore, belongs to that quiddity through some cause. This is either through something that is part of the essence of that thing, or the essence itself, or through something else. If we adopt the first alternative, and it is a fact that the essence is through that being, it follows that something is the cause of its own being. This is impossible, because, in their notions, the existence of the cause is prior to that of the effect. If then, something were its own cause of being, it would be understood to be before it had being—which is impossible, unless we understand that something is the cause of its own being in an accidental order, which is being in an accidental way. This is not impossible. It is possible that there be an accidental being that is caused by the principles of its subject before the substantial being of its subject is understood as given. Here, however, we are speaking of substantial being, not accidental being. On the other hand, if the being belongs to the essence through some other cause, then this follows: given that what acquires its being from another cause is something caused, and is not the first cause, whereas God, as was demonstrated above [ch. 13], is the first cause and has no cause, the quiddity that

acquires its being from another is not the quiddity of God. God's being must, therefore, be His quiddity.

4) *Being* [esse], furthermore, is the name of an act, for a thing is not said to be because it is in potency but because it is in act. Everything, however, that has an act diverse from it is related to that act as potency to act; for potency and act are said relatively to one another. If, then, the divine essence is something other than its being, the essence and the being are thereby related as potency and act. But we have shown that in God there is no potency, but that He is pure act [ch. 16]. God's essence, therefore, is not something other than His being.

5) Moreover, if something can exist only when several elements come together, it is composite. But no thing in which the essence is other than the being can exist unless several elements come together, namely the essence and the being. Hence, every thing in which the essence is other than the being is composite. But, as we have shown, God is not composite [ch. 18]. Therefore, God's being is His essence.

6) Every thing, furthermore, exists because it has being. A thing whose essence is not its being, consequently, is not through its essence but by participation in something, namely being itself. But that which is through participation in something cannot be the first being, because prior to it is the being in which it participates in order to be. But God is the first being, with nothing prior to Him. His essence is, therefore, His being.

7) This sublime truth Moses was taught by God. When Moses asked the Lord: "If the children of Israel say to me: what is His name? What shall I say to them?" The Lord replied: "I AM WHO AM . . . Thou shalt say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS hath sent me to you" (Exod. 3:13, 14). By this the Lord showed that His own proper name is HE WHO IS. Now, names have been devised to signify the natures or essences of things. It remains, then, that the divine being is God's essence or nature.

8) Catholic teachers have likewise professed this truth. For Hilary writes in his book *De Trinitate* [VII, n; PL. 10, 208B]: "Being is not an accident in God but subsisting truth, the abiding cause and the natural property of His nature." Boethius also says in his own work *De Trinitate* [II; PL. 64, 1250B]: "The divine substance is being itself, and from it comes being." (From *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith,* by Anton Pegis. Copyright 1955 by Doubleday & Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the Publisher.)

XIV. IS IT NECESSARY THAT EVERY BEING BE CREATED BY GOD?

(Summa theol. Ia, q.44, a.i)

This article begins the treatise on creation in the *Summa theologiae.* It is also an article in which, we might add, the metaphysical structure of being, or being in its concrete reality, is traced down to its ultimate feature. Arguing, by causality, from the fact of contingent being, St. Thomas had earlier made good the existence of a first being, identical, as we have seen, with its essence. It is similarly by causality that the present article argues the creation of all other beings. As in the Fourth Way, and in the capital demonstration of identity of essence and existence in God, so in the present instance St. Thomas, it is noteworthy, bases the argument on the relation of participated being to nonparticipated, or per se being. Without a doubt, then, it is within the framework of participation that the metaphysical cast of being acquires its most complete, indeed its final delineation. (Collate with *supra,* "The First Cause," p. 229).

Objection 1. It would seem that it is not necessary that every being be created by God. For there is nothing to prevent a thing

from being without that which does not belong to its essence, as a man can be found without whiteness. But the relation of the thing caused to its cause does not appear to be essential to beings, for some beings can be understood without it. Therefore they can exist without it; and hence it is possible that some beings should not be created by God.

Obj. 2. Further, a thing requires an efficient cause in order to exist. Therefore whatever cannot not-be does not require an efficient cause. But no necessary thing can not-be, because whatever necessarily exists cannot not-be. Therefore as there are many necessary things in existence, it appears that not all beings are from God.

Obj. 3. Further, among whatever things there is a cause, there can be demonstration by that cause. But in mathematics demonstration is not made *by the efficient cause,* as appears from the Philosopher *[Metaph.* B, 2, 996 a 29]. Therefore not all beings are from God as from their efficient cause.

On the contrary, It is said [Rom. xi. 36]: *Of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things.*

I answer that, It must be said that everything that in any way is, is from God. For whatever is found in anything by participation must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially, as iron becomes heated by fire. Now it has been shown above, when treating of the divine simplicity, that God is self-subsisting being itself [q. 3, a. 4], and also that subsisting being can be only one [q. 7, a. 1, ad 3; a. 2]; just as, if whiteness were self-subsisting, it would be one, since whiteness is multiplied by its recipients. Therefore all beings other than God are not their own being, but are beings by participation. Therefore, it must be that all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being, who possesses being most perfectly.

Hence Plato said that unity must come before multitude [cf.

St. Augustine, *De Civit. Dei,* VIII, 4]; and Aristotle said that whatever is greatest in being and greatest in truth is the cause of every being and of every truth, just as *whatever is the greatest in heat is the cause of all heat [Metaph.* a, 1, 993 b 25].

Reply Obj. 1. Though relation to its cause is not part of the definition of a thing caused, still it follows as a result of what belongs to its nature. For, from the fact that a thing is being by participation, it follows that it is caused. Hence such a being cannot be without being caused, just as man cannot be without having the faculty of laughing. But, since to be caused does not enter into the nature of being taken absolutely, that is why there exists a being that is uncaused.

Reply Obj. 2. This objection has led some to say that what is necessary has no cause [cf. *Phys.* VIII, 1, 252 a 35]. But this is manifestly false in demonstrative sciences, where necessary principles are the causes of necessary conclusions. And therefore Aristotle says that there are some necessary things which have a cause of their necessity *[Metaph.* A, 5, 1015 b 9]. But the reason why an efficient cause is required is not merely because the effect can not-be, but because the effect would not be if the cause were not. For this conditional proposition is true, whether the antecedent and consequent be possible or impossible.

Reply Obj. 3. Although they are not abstract in reality, mathematicals are considered in abstraction by the reason. Now, it belongs to a thing to have an efficient cause according as it has being. And so, although mathematicals do have an efficient cause, it is not according to their relation to their efficient cause that they fall under the consideration of the mathematician. Therefore there is no demonstration by means of an efficient cause in mathematics. (From *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* edited by Anton C. Pegis. Copyright Random House, Inc., 1945. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc., Publishers.)

Glossary of Technical Terms

A

ABSTRACTION.—In general, the act whereby the intellect segregates an aspect of a thing (from other aspects).

1. Basically, abstraction is the act whereby the intellect educes the intelligible from the material conditions under which it is given to the senses.

2. In *total abstraction* the intellect draws the universal (or logical whole) from the individuals comprising its inferiors; the concept thus obtained is that of a genus or species (animal, man). —In *formal abstraction* one of the formal aspects of a thing is marked out; e.g. in mathematics, the quantitative aspect of bodies.

3. Degrees *of abstraction.* Tire three principal levels of intelligibility (physical, mathematical, metaphysical) which the human intellect can consider in its object by progressive relinquishment of the conditions of matter.

ACCIDENT.—1. Metaphysics: *predicamental accident.* That to which it pertains to exist in another as in a subject of inherence; e.g. color, magnitude. Opposed to substance. The

nine accidents, with substance, constitute the categories or predicaments.

2. Logic: *predicable accident.* That which is said of a subject by way of quality and as not necessary; e.g. the quality "learned" said of a man.

3. *Accidental being* [ens per accidens]. Being which does not have proper (or essential) causality; e.g. that this man is learned is accidental to him. Opposed to being which exists essentially [ens per se],

ACT.—That which is complete or perfect in its order, as against what is only in potency.

1. *Entitative act* (first act). The act through which a being is simply and formally what it is.

2. *Operative act* (second act). Designates the activity or operation of a being, which presupposes that it be in first act.

3. *Pure act.* Act which excludes all potentiality, namely God.

ACTION [actio, actus]. —1. Designates the fact of activity in a subject, its operation. One of the nine predicamental accidents. Opposed to passion.

2. *Transitive action.* Action which terminates outside the subject and perfects or modifies not the subject primarily, but another; e.g. cutting, burning.

3. *Immanent action.* Action, which terminates in its subject and perfects the subject itself; e.g. thinking, willing.

AGENT.—The subject, whether person or thing, which exercises an activity.

"AGIBILE" [the "do-able"]. —That which pertains to the realm of immanent action, or of morality; more precisely that which can be the object of a "human act" as such. Opposed to *factibile* [the make-able], which designates the object of material production.

ALTERATION.—In Aristotelian physics, a qualitative change;

e.g. variation of temperature. Alteration is one of the three species of accidental motion distinguished by Aristotle.

ANALOGOUS.—Property of a concept or term which refers to its inferiors, or the things it embraces, with a meaning in each case partly the same and partly different. Opposed to univocal and equivocal. Principal division:

1. Analogy of *attribution.* Analogy of a term which applies to several things in view of their relation to one other thing (the primary analogate); e.g. "healthy," which applies to medicine, complexion, diet, etc. because of the relation that exists between these things and an animal, which alone is healthy in the formal sense.

2. Analogy of *proportionality.* Analogy of a concept or term which applies to several things by reason of an intrinsic similarity, specifically a similarity of relations; e.g. vision, ocular or intellectual.

ANTECEDENT.—The premises of a syllogism taken together in reference to the conclusion, or consequent.

APPETITE.—1. In a very general sense, the inclination or tendency which follows on the nature of a being.

2. *Natural* appetite (or innate). The purely passive disposition of a being toward its end as determined by its natural form; e.g. in ancient physics, the downward tendency of a stone. Noncognitive beings have only natural appetite. In cognitive beings it designates the radical disposition of a faculty to its end; e.g. of the intellect to truth, of the will to good.

3. *Animal* appetite (or elicited). In cognitive beings, the faculty or actual inclination which follows on the apprehension of a form: *sensitive* appetite, if the form or knowledge in question is of the sensible order; *intellectual* appetite, or will, when the presupposed knowledge is of the rational order.

APPREHENSION.—Act by which the intellect simply grasps

an object, neither affirming nor denying anything of it. Simple apprehension is the first of the three operations of the human intellect.

ARGUMENTATION.—Verbal expression of an act of reasoning, third operation of the intellect.

ART.—1. Objectively or physically, designates the extrinsic principle, rational in character, of an operational process; e.g. the art of building as compared with the act of building. Opposed to *nature,* an immanent or intrinsic principle of activity. Art constitutes the domain of the fashioned and fabricated, in contrast to the natural, the work of nature.

2. Considered in reference to the subject, art is a *habitus* (first species of quality), a stable disposition perfecting the subject relative to a given activity. In this respect it is one of the five intellectual virtues, that which directs the activity of production.

"ASEITY."—Property of being which consists in self-existence, or self-subsistence. Taken strictly, "aseity" belongs only to God and is his most fundamental attribute.

ATOM.—Ultimate, indivisible physical element. In Aristotelian philosophy atoms are, however, subject to generation and corruption, and on this score are composed of prime matter and substantial form.

ATTRIBUTE.—1. Logic. Term of a proposition telling what is affirmed or denied of a subject. Synonym: *predicate.*

2. Metaphysics. The *attributes of God,* the different aspects of his nature.

ATTRIBUTION.—1. Act of referring the predicate to the subject. Synonym: *predication.* In Scholastic Latin this act is also designated by the verb "to say" *(dicere).* There are various modes of attribution—essential (per se), accidental (per accidens), etc.

2. One of the forms of analogy, that *of attribution.*

AUGMENTATION.—A quantitative change. Augmentation (or diminution: *decrementum)* is one of the species of physical change distinguished by Aristotle. Refers only to living things.

AXIOM.—A self-evident proposition governing a series of demonstrations. Equivalent expressions: first principles, *dignitates, maximae propositiones,* propositions "known in themselves" *(per se notae).*

B

BEATITUDE.—1. *Objectively,* state of perfection of a rational being that has attained its ultimate perfection.

2. *Subjectively,* the joy from conscious possession of the supreme good.

BEING [ens, esse].—1. Expresses relation of essence to the act of being, i.e. to existence.

2. *Real* being (actual or possible): what exists or can exist; the being, considered as being, which is the formal object of metaphysics.

3. Being *of reason,* or logical [ens rationis]: that which can only exist in the intellect conceiving it.

"Being" is an analogical term, admitting of various acceptations and divisions.

C

CATEGOREMATIC.—Property of terms which signify in themselves; e.g. the term "man." Opposed to *syncategorematic* terms, such as prepositions, which do not properly signify except in conjunction with another; e.g. "they went *to* Rome."

CATEGORICAL.—1. *Categorical proposition.* One in which there is simple or unqualified attribution of a predicate to a subject; e.g. "Peter is a man."

2. *Categorical syllogism.* Common form of the syllogism, in which only categorical propositions occur.

CATEGORIES (usually designated by the synonymous Latin derivative, *predicaments).* —The supreme genera of being, namely substance and the nine accidents: quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, situation, possession.

CAUSALITY.—Properly, signifies the act itself of causing, i.e. of actually producing something. There are as many types of causality as there are types of causes.

CAUSE.—i. *In the real order.* That on which a thing depends for its being or its becoming. The cause must be prior to the effect, and really distinct from it, and the dependence of the effect must be positive or real.

2. *In the order of explanation.* Cause is that which explains or gives the reason of a thing. On this account science is said to be: knowledge through causes.

3. *Fourfold division* (the basic types). *Material* cause: that from which a thing is made and which remains in it. *Formal* cause: that which determines a thing to a certain mode of being. *Efficient* cause: that from which comes the first beginning of change or of rest. *Final* cause: that for the sake of which something is made or done.

4. *Principal* cause. That which produces its effect by its own power or efficacy. Opposed to *instrumental* cause, which acts only under motion from another.

CHANCE, *[automaton, casus, fortuna].*—1. In general, designates an accidental cause bearing on things which happen rarely and are not intended by the agent, but could have been sought as an end.

2. Chance, when it touches on tire activity of man, is called *fortune.*

CHANGE *[mutatio, motus],*—1. In general, any transformation or modification of a being of nature.

2. *Substantial* change (generation-corruption). Change which terminates in a new substance.

3. *Accidental* change. Modification occurring in one and the same substance. If the change falls under motion in the strict sense, it is one of three: *alteration,* change of quality; *augmentation-diminution,* change of quantity; *local motion,* change of place.

COGITATIVE SENSE.—1. One of the four internal senses, namely that through which the object perceived by the common sense is recognized as beneficial or harmful to the subject.

2. Corresponding to the *cogitative,* which is proper to man, is the *estimative* sense in animals; e.g., it is in virtue of an instinctive appraisal by this faculty that the sheep flees the wolf.

COMMON SENSE *[sensus communis].*—One of the internal senses whose proper function is to perceive the activities of the several external senses and to compare and discriminate their presentations.

COMPREHENSION.—1. Logic. Sum of the notes comprising a concept and distinguishing it from other concepts; e.g. the comprehension of "man" includes the notes of substantiality, life, animality, rationality. Opposed to *extension.*

2. Psychology. Act whereby the intellect grasps an object all-inclusively.

CONCEPT.—That which represents a thing to the intellect. Subjectively, what the intellect produces through its immanent activity and in which it contemplates its object. Corresponding terms: "mental word," "expressed species."

CONCEPTION.—Tire act of forming a concept. Synonym: the act of expression *[dicere).* The *dicere* is really distinct from the act of grasping the object (the *intelligere).*

CONCUPISCIBLE APPETITE.—One of the two faculties of the sensory appetite whose object is the good simply or easily

attained, or the evil in like manner avoided. Distinguished from *irascible* appetite, which bears on the difficult good or evil, i.e. difficult of attainment or avoidance.

CONSEQUENCE.—Logical connection of propositions in demonstrative reasoning. The *consequent* designates the proposition derived from the premises, called the *antecedent.*

CONTINGENT.—That which can not-be, or which does not have in itself the sufficient reason of its existence. Opposed to *necessary,* that which cannot not-be, or which cannot be other than it is. All created beings are contingent.

CONTINUUM.—1. That which is composed of homogeneous parts whose terms (limits) merge into one. Distinguished from *contiguous,* which implies that the parts touch but their limits remain distinct from each other.

2. *Continuous quantity.* That species of quantity which results from continuous parts.

CONTRADICTORY.—1. Property of *concepts* which so exclude each other as to admit of no middle ground between them; e.g. white and not-white.

2. *Contradictory propositions.* Those of which one affirms absolutely what the other denies. Such propositions differ both in quantity and quality; e.g. "every man is just" and "some man is not just."

Contradiction constitutes the extreme mode of opposition. The principle of noncontradiction is the supreme law of thought.

CONTRARY.—1. Property of *concepts* which do not absolutely exclude each other from the same subject, but admit of a common genus; e.g. white and black (of the same genus: color).

2. *Contrary propositions.* Those which are opposed in quality only; e.g. "every man is just" and "no man is just."

CONVERSION.—Logic. Operation which interchanges the subject and predicate of a proposition without destroying the truth of the proposition; e.g. "no man is an angel" to "no angel is a man."

COPULA.—The verb "to be" as signifying the relation of subject and predicate in a proposition; e.g. "Peter *is* a man."

CORRUPTION.—Change by which a substance is destroyed. The correlative of *generation,* change which terminates in a new substance. Every corruption necessarily involves a generation.

D

DEFINITION.—Complex term which makes explicit the nature of a thing or the meaning of a concept. In the active sense: the operation which results in the above.

DEMONSTRATION.—In strict Aristotelian logic, demonstration is a course of reasoning or a syllogism which begins with premises that are true and leads to a conclusion that is certain, or scientific (in the Aristotelian sense).

DIFFERENCE.—1. In general, that by which a thing is distinguished from another.

2. *Specific* difference. That which determines a genus to a species distinct from other species of the same genus; e.g. the difference "rational" determines the genus "animal" to the species "man."

DILEMMA.—Argument in which the antecedent states a disjunction from either member of which the same conclusion will follow.

DISCRETE (QUANTITY).—One of the two species of quantity, namely that which results from homogeneous parts which are actually distinct (numerical quantity). Opposed to continuous (or concrete) quantity.

DISPOSITION.—Precise sense: state of being which, together with *habitus,* constitutes the first species of quality but is less stable than *habitus.*

DISTINCTION.—1. Difference by which two objects of thought are distinguished or separated from each other.

2. *Real* distinction. That which is actually in the thing itself; e.g. between substance and its accidents.

3. Distinction *of reason* (logical). That which is only in the mind conceiving it, but may be founded in reality *(rationis ratiocinatae), e.g.* distinction between genus and species; or not founded *(rationis ratiocinantis), e.g.* two words designating the same thing.

DIVISION.—Complex term (or the operation) which distributes a whole (thing or name) into its parts.

E

ELECTION.—Designates the act by which the intellect, in the course of the deliberate human act, chooses one of the means presented to it.

ELEMENT.—1. Ultimate part of a complex whole.

2. Cosmology. First intrinsic component of a being of nature, not divisible into specifically distinct parts. Ancient cosmology acknowledged four elements: water, air, earth, fire.

END.—1. That for the sake of which something is made or done. The end has the nature of cause, and stands at the beginning of every causative process.

2. Divisions:

a) End as realized *(in executions'),* and as object of desire *(in intentione).*

b) End to which a work or thing is appointed by its very nature *(finis operis),* and end which the agent pursues *(finis operantis).*

c) End or good desired *(finis cujus gratin')*, and for whom this same good is desired *(finis cui)*.

ENUNCIATION.—1. Mental or verbal expression corresponding to the second operation of the mind.

2. *Simple* enunciation. Simple attribution of a predicate to a subject.

3. *Compound* enunciation. Simple enunciations joined, as the case may be, by the particles "if" (hypothetical), "or" (disjunctive), "and" (conjunctive).

ENTELECHY *[entelekeid]*.—Form or act considered as principle of being (entitative act).

EQUALITY.—Relation of two identical quantities. Equality is the mode of unity pertaining to the predicament of quantity.

EQUIVOCAL.—Property of a term applied to various objects according to meanings that differ absolutely in each case; ex. "dog," the animal and the constellation. Opposed to univocal and analogous.

ESSENCE—That by which a thing is such and such and, in consequence, differentiated from other things. (Or: that by which a thing is *what* it is, as opposed to that by which it *is.)* Essence enters into real composition with existence to constitute a limited or contingent being. Corresponds to "second substance," which designates the intelligible content of substance.

ESTIMATIVE SENSE.—See *Cogitative Sense.*

EXEMPLAR.—Model according to which a thing is made. The *exemplary cause* can be considered as an extrinsic formal cause.

EXISTENCE [esse, *existentia*].—Ultimate act of a being which causes it to be in reality.

EXTENSION.—Totality of subjects to which a concept applies. Opposed to comprehension.

F

FALSE.—Opposed to true. See *Truth.*

FIGURE.—1. Logic. Arrangement of the syllogism resulting from the position of the middle term in the premises. There are four figures of the syllogism.

2. Metaphysics. Qualitative mode which terminates quantity. Comprises, with "form," the fourth species of quality.

FORM.—In general, determinative principle of a being.

1. Physics. One of the three principles of physical being (the two others: matter and privation).

a) *Substantial* form: that which, by determining prime matter, constitutes a given nature.

b) *Accidental* form: determination supervening upon a being already constituted as to its essence.

2. Metaphysics. By extension, any determination of being, even a determination not received in matter; e.g. angels, known as pure or separate forms.

3. Metaphysics. "Form," together with "figure," comprises the fourth species of quality.

4. Logic. *Form of reasoning* (in syllogism): disposition of premises considered independently of their intrinsic validity.

FORMAL.—1. That which stems from or relates to form. The formal aspect always corresponds to what is determinate or actual in a thing or a conception.

2. *Formal object.* Precise and determinate aspect attained by a power or *habitus.* Opposed to *material object.*

FORTUNE.—See *Chance.*

FREE WILL [St. Thomas: *liberum arbitrium,* lit. "free judgment"].—1. Basically, free will designates the power of will whereby, in association with the intellect, it can choose one thing rather than another.

2. Derivatively, the term "free will" can also be understood of the act of the will, i.e. its act of choice or election. This act, though in the will, always presupposes a judgment of the intellect.

3. The intimate association between the specifying activity of the intellect and the exercise of will is precisely what characterizes St. Thomas' doctrine of freedom. For him, free choice is a matter of intellective appetite, *appetitus intellectivus*. Opposed to the free act is the act born of a necessitating inclination.

G

GENERATION.—Substantial change terminating in a new substance. [It is not improper, however, to speak of "accidental generation" as well]. See *Corruption*.

GENUS.—Universal expressing, though only in part, the essence of its inferiors; ex. "animal." One of the five predicables.

GOOD.—1. Being itself, considered as capable of fulfilling a desire, or under the aspect of perfection. Good is what all things desire. Like one and true, good is a transcendental property of being.

2. Threefold division *(honestum, utile, delectabile')*. *Righteous* good: that which is sought for its own sake, or for its own goodness. *Useful* good: that which is sought purely as a means, or for the sake of something else. *Pleasant* good: the enjoyment that attaches to the attainment of a good.

H

"HABITUS."—1. Metaphysics. Possession: the fact that what the subject is provided with is on the subject but wholly extrinsic to it; ex. "to be clothed." *Habitus* is the tenth, and last, predicament given by Aristotle.

2. Psychology, Moral Philosophy. That by which a subject is well- or ill-disposed with respect to its form or end. *Habitus* and *disposition* make up the first species of quality.

3. Basic division. *Entitative* habitus: pertains to being; ex. grace. *Operative* habitus: the more common type; that by which the subject is immediately disposed to act; ex. the virtues.

4. Note. The vernacular "habit" denotes rather the manner of the act, necessarily implying, it would seem, a degree of mechanicalness and repetition. It has therefore a more specialized and more restricted meaning than "habitus."

HYLOMORPHISM.—Physical doctrine according to which bodies are ultimately composed of the two principles of matter and form. Distinctive of Aristotelian cosmology and opposed, above all, to *atomism*.

HYPOTHETICAL.—1. *Hypothetical propositions* are compound propositions formed from simple propositions joined by copulas ("and," "if," "or") other than the verb "to be."

2. In the *hypothetical syllogism* the major is an hypothetical proposition, and the minor posits or sublates (denies) one of the members of the major.

I

IDEA.—Exemplar (form) in the mind of the maker according to which a thing is made. In St. Thomas the word "idea" is reserved to the divine exemplar; thus its meaning is not the same as in contemporary psychology.

IDENTITY.—1. In precise sense, the unity of substance.

2. *Principle of identity.* One of the first principles of thought.

IMAGINATION.—Faculty which conserves and reproduces images, i.e. presentations of the outer senses. One of the four inner senses.

IMMANENT.—That which remains in the subject. *Immanent action* terminates in the acting subject and perfects the subject itself. Immanence is the distinctive mark of vital operations. Opposed to *transeunt action,* which terminates in another and perfects the other.

IMPOSSIBLE.—That which cannot be, or which involves contradiction. Opposed to *possible.*

INDIVIDUAL.—1. Logic. Ultimate subject, in no way predicable. The species comprises the individuals.

2. Metaphysics. In the sense of *supposit:* being as endowed with its own incommunicable subsistence.

INDUCTION.—In general, reasoning from the particular to the universal.

INSTRUMENTAL (CAUSE).—Cause which acts according to the power of its own form but as moved by another (the principal cause).

INTELLECT *[intellectus, intelligentia],*—1. Designates, most often, the spiritual faculty of knowledge (in more modern terminology, usually "intelligence").

2. *Agent* intellect. Faculty which abstracts the intelligible species from sense images.

3. *Passive* or *possible* intellect. Faculty which receives the abstracted likeness (species).

4. *Intellectus* (understanding). The term for the intellectual *habitus* (virtue) which perfects the intellect in its grasp of first principles.

INTELLECTION.—The act by which the intellect apprehends its object, or knows. Differentiated from *diction* (expression), the act that produces the mental word in which the object is known.

INTELLIGIBLE.—That which can be immediately apprehended by the intellect. In Aristotelian doctrine, intelligibility is a function of immateriality.

INTENTION.—1. Moral Philosophy. Orientation of a tendency, and in particular of the will, towards its end.

2. Psychology. Tire concept as ordered to represent an external thing.

3. Logic. *Second intentions* (in contrast to first intentions): the concept as a logical being of reason, or as emanating from the activity of the mind only.

4. *Intentional order.* The order of representation, or of objects as they exist in thought (and in knowledge generally).

INTUITION *[intuitus, perceptio].*—Designates, regularly, the experimental grasp of a concrete object. Opposed to *conception,* which corresponds rather to the abstractive mode of knowledge, or to the formation of a concept.

IRASCIBLE (APPETITE).—One of the two faculties of sensible appetition; its object is the difficult (to attain) good or the difficult (to avoid) evil.

J

JUDGMENT.—1. In the general sense, act of the intellect which corresponds to the second operation of the mind.

2. In the strict sense, judgment *[judicium)* in St. Thomas is not any judgment whatever but one which serves to terminate a deliberative state of affairs in the order of wisdom; e.g. a decree handed down by a judge.

3. When referring to the second operation of the mind in all its generality, St. Thomas regularly employs the expression *compositio vel divisio,* the act of the intellect which composes or divides, i.e. affirms or denies.

L

LIFE.—1. Spontaneous and immanent activity, proper to living things.

2. Principal degrees of life: vegetative, sensitive, and intellective.

M

MAJOR.—In the categorical syllogism, the premise containing the major term.

MATTER.—1. That of which a thing is made as of an immanent principle. Matter and form are the intrinsic principles of physical being.

2. *Prime* (first) matter: first and absolutely undetermined subject which, with substantial form, constitutes the substantial nature of bodies.

3. *Second* matter: subject in which accidental forms or determinations of corporeal substances are received.

4. *Intelligible, sensible, individual* matter: matter as abstracted in varying degree (intelligible, sensible), or not at all (individual).

MEMORY.—Faculty which evokes nonsensible perceptions so far as they refer to the past. One of the four inner senses. According to St. Thomas there is no intellectual memory that would be distinct from the intellect itself.

"MENS" (MIND).—The human soul as principle of its spiritual operations, namely intellection and volition.

MIDDLE TERM.—In the syllogism, the term common to both premises.

MINOR.—In the syllogism, the premise containing the minor term.

MIXTURE.—In Aristotelian cosmology, body resulting from the composition of several elementary substances and constituting a single new substance in place of the several original.

MODALITY.—1. Property of propositions expressing the manner in which the predicate applies, or does not apply, to the subject (in the manner: possible, impossible, necessary, or contingent).

2. *Modal proposition:* one in which the mode is explicitly stated.

3. *Modal syllogism:* one in which at least one premise is a modal proposition.

MODE.—In general, anything that determines or modifies a being.

MOOD.—Logic. Disposition of the syllogism resulting from the quantity and the quality of each premise.

MOTION.—1. Metaphysical definition: the act of what is in potency as such, or precisely as in potency.

2. Division. Besides substantial change, which is not strictly a motion, Aristotle distinguishes three types of motion proper: a) local motion, b) qualitative alteration, and c) quantitative augmentation and diminution.

MOTIVITY.—Function in virtue of which animals move themselves locally. Presupposes a special faculty, the locomotive power.

MOVABLE.—That which is moved. The movable is the subject of motion.

MOVER.—1. The active principle of motion. Opposed to movable, the subject of motion.

2. *Prime* (first) *mover.* In Aristotelianism, ultimate principle of physical motion, reductively pure act, God.

N

NATURE.—1. Physics. In a physical being, the intrinsic principle of its motion and rest. Nature, as a principle of operation, is opposed to art, an extrinsic principle and, moreover, of the rational order.

2. By extension, nature designates the sum total of physical beings, the physical universe.

3. The meaning of nature is further enlarged to signify the essence of any being, even of the purely spiritual.

4. From the standpoint of intelligible content, nature corresponds to form and essence.

NECESSARY.—That which cannot not-be. Opposed to *contingent,* that which can not-be.

NOUN.—The noun is a term signifying nontemporally. Noun and verb (the latter always connoting time) are the necessary and sufficient elements of enunciation.

NUMBER.—A species of quantity. Definition: a multitude measured by the unit. Numerical multitude and unit must be distinguished from transcendental multitude and unit. See *One.*

O

OBEDIENTIAL (POTENCY).—Designates the aptitude of a nature to receive, by power of a superior agent, a determination surpassing its natural capacities. Creatures are in obediential potency with respect to God, the supreme agent.

OBJECT.—1. That which is directly attained by a power and determines it.

2. *Formal* object: that aspect of a thing which constitutes the specific attainment of a power or faculty.

3. *Material* object: the thing attained, considered in its whole reality.

ONE.—1. *Transcendental* one. Designates the undividedness of being as being. A transcendental property of being.

2. *Predicamental* one. The unit as principle and measure of number.

3. Opposed, either sense, to the *many.*

OPPOSITION.—1. In general, the relation of exclusion between two things or two forms.

2. The four modes of opposition: opposition of relatives, of contraries, of privation and possession, of contradiction.

3. *Opposition of propositions.* Relations of exclusion between propositions having the same subject and predicate but varying as to quantity or quality or both.

P

PARTICIPATION.—i. The fact of having part in a form.

2. There are two basic types of participation. By *composition:* when a subject receives a form which in its source subsists by itself. By *similitude* or likeness: when a form is only imperfectly what another form on which it depends is perfectly or in fullness.

PARTICULAR.—i. A *term* taken only according to part of its extension; e.g. "some man."

2. *Particular proposition.* One in which the subject is a particular term.

PASSION.—i. The fact of being modified or of undergoing a change of some kind. One of the ten predicaments.

2. Moral philosophy. Passions, in this more special sense, designate the various modifications of the sensible appetite.

PATIENT.—That which undergoes a modification. Motion is founded in the patient (rather than the agent).

"PERSEITY."—Property of that which exists by itself, namely of substance. N.B. In this sense "per se" never has causative implication.

PERSON *[persona, hypostasis].*—Rational, subsistent, individual substance; "supposit," as understood of the rational being.

PHANTASMS *[phantasmata].*—Term regularly employed by St. Thomas for sense images, especially as point of departure for intellectual abstraction.

PLACE.—i. Physics. Terminus or limit of the containing body, this terminus being immovable when considered in relation to a first container which, as such, is necessarily immovable.

2. *Local motion.* Motion relative to place.

3. *Natural* place. In Aristotelian cosmology, the place toward which a given element naturally tends and in which it comes to rest; ex. the upper region for fire, etc.

4. Logic. The *commonplaces (loci communes'):* universally accepted general principles which govern a course of argumentation.

POSSIBLE.—That which can be, or which is free of intrinsic contradiction. Opposed to *impossible:* that which cannot be.

POTENCY.—1. Any capacity for change or determination. Typified by relation to act; hence is defined as "that which can be but is not as what is in act."

2. Principal divisions. *Active* potency: the potency to change another as other. *Passive* potency: the potency to be changed by another as other. *Natural* potency: such as is found in a thing by reason of its nature. *Obediential* potency: aptitude of a being to receive from a higher agent a determination surpassing its nature; e.g. supernatural grace.

3. Potency and act are primary divisions of real being.

PRACTICAL.—1. In precise psychological and logical terminology, designates that which pertains to action as against that which refers to pure contemplation; used in this sense in *practical intellect* and *practical sciences.*

2. In more restrictive use, the term "practical" designates the order of moral activity, the *agibile,* as distinct from the order of making, the *factibile.*

PREDICABLES.—Logic. A group of universal concepts distinguished according to their relation to the inferiors of which they can be predicated. There are five predicables: genus, species, difference, property, accident.

PREDICAMENTS.—Synonymous with *Categories, q.v.*

PREDICATE.—See *Attribute.*

PREMISES.—The first two propositions of a syllogism. The premises constitute the antecedent, from which is drawn the consequent.

PRINCIPLE.—*Id unde. . . .* That from which a thing begins to be made or to be known; hence, that from which some-

thing proceeds in any manner whatever. "Principle" is a wider term than "cause," which implies, additionally, real dependence of being on the part of the thing made. Every cause is a principle, but not every principle a cause.

PRIVATION.—i. Absence of a perfection which by nature a being should have; e.g. blindness. The privation-possession relation typifies one kind of opposition.

2. Cosmology. Privation is one of the principles of mobile (physical) being.

PROPERTY *[proprietas, proprium].*—That which necessarily flows from the essence of a thing. The property *[proprium)* which denotes the characteristic quality or trait of a given essence is one of the five predicables.

PROPORTIONALITY.—*Analogy of proportionality:* one kind of analogy. See *Analogous.*

PROPOSITION.—i. Verbal expression of a judgment comprising essentially two terms, subject and predicate, joined by a copula.

2. Principal divisions. As to quality: affirmative and negative; as to quantity: universal, particular, singular.

PRUDENCE.—A habitus or virtue whose function it is to direct human action according to right reason in the realm of the contingent. One of the five intellectual virtues.

Q

QUALITY.—i. Accident intrinsically modifying substance, or disposing it in itself. One of the ten predicaments.

2. The four species of quality: a) disposition and habitus; b) potency and impotency, c) passible qualities, d) figure and form.

3. Logic. Property of propositions according to which they are affirmative or negative.

"QUANDO" [lit. "when"].—Designates the predicament said of time. Signifies the exact temporal circumstance; ex. yesterday.

QUANTITY.—1. Accident consisting essentially in the internal divisibility of a body and in the extension of its parts.

2. Division. *Continuous* or *concrete,* the quantity of magnitude; *discontinuous* or *discrete,* the quantity of number.

3. Logic. Property of terms corresponding to their extension (universal, particular, singular). By derivation, property of propositions corresponding to the extension conferred on the subject.

"QUIDDITAS."—Translated "quiddity" ("whatness"). Literally, that which answers to the question *quid sit,* "what is it?" Expresses the essence or the definition of a thing.

R

REASON.—1. Psychology. Intelligence considered in its discursive function; opposed to *intellectus* (understanding), which is intelligence considered more specially as power of intuition.

2. *Being of reason.* That which, as such, can only exist in the mind. Opposed to real being.

3. "Ratio" (in the sense of such expressions as "ratio entis," "ratio veri," etc.) designates a formal or objective principle of a thing but as explaining or giving the reason of it. The vernacular "reason," though hard to better, is in this instance a very inadequate rendition of the Latin.

4. Principle of *sufficient reason.* One of the prime laws of thought.

REASONING *[ratiocinatio, argumentatio].*—Act of the intellect which consists in going from one thing to another in such a way that from knowledge of what is known we come to

knowledge of what was unknown. Constitutes the third operation of the mind.

RELATION *[relatio, ad aliquid].*—1. In general, how one thing stands in regard to another: *ad aliud.*

2. *Transcendental* relation. Essential order of one thing to another; ex. order of the intellect to the true.

3. *Predicamental* relation. Accident of which the whole reality consists in "towardness" or reference to another; e.g. relation of likeness. One of the ten predicaments.

S

SCIENCE.—1. In strict Aristotelian doctrine, signifies knowledge through causes. Subjectively, science is one of the five speculative virtues (habitus).

2. Division. *Speculative* science: whose only end is knowledge. *Practical* science: which is ordered to action.

SENSE.—1. Power or faculty of knowledge whose act is sensation and which utilizes a corporeal organ.

2. Division. Five outer senses; four inner senses (common sense, imagination, memory, cogitative or, in the animal, estimative).

SENSIBLE.—1. The object of sensory powers.

2. Distinctions. *Proper* object (or sensible): that which is apprehended immediately and as such (color, by sight). *Common* object: apprehended by more than one sense (magnitude). *Accidental [per accidens)* object: perceived indirectly only, by medium of a proper object (a man, by sight).

SIGN.—1. That through which another thing becomes known.

2. *Natural* sign. Based on a natural connection between sign and signified.

3. *Conventional* sign. When the connection with the thing signified comes from human choice or agreement.

SIMILITUDE *[similitudo, species]*,—1. The similar designates the mode of unity pertaining to quality.

2. Psychology. Similitude, likeness, or "species": representation whereby an external thing is rendered present to intellect or sense.

SINGULAR.—1. *Term* whose extension is reduced to a single individual.

2. *Singular* proposition. A proposition with a singular term as subject.

SITUATION [situs].—Disposition as to place of the parts of a body. One of the ten predicaments.

SOUL.—1. The first immaterial principle of life. In Aristotelian doctrine, the soul is the substantial form of the body it animates.

2. *Vegetative, sensitive* soul. Principles, respectively, of plant and animal life.

3. *Rational* soul. Principle of rational or spiritual life, proper to man. Also exercises the functions of the vegetative and sensitive soul, whose place it takes.

"SPECIES."—See *Similitude*.

SUBJECT.—1. Logic. That of which something is affirmed or denied in a proposition. Opposed to *predicate*.

2. In science, the thing of which the properties are determinded; e.g. number, subject of arithmetic.

3. Psychology. That which knows, as against that which is known, the object.

4. Metaphysics. In general, that which receives form. On this score, matter is subject.

SUBSISTENCE.—Substantial mode terminating the essence and rendering it incommunicable. According to the foremost commentators of St. Thomas, subsistence is really distinct from essence and from existence.

SUBSTANCE.—1. That which has the aptitude to exist in itself and not in another. One of the ten predicaments. Opposed to *accident.*

2. *First* substance. The concrete, individual subject; e.g. Peter.

3. *Second* substance. Abstract essence of the subject; e.g. "man."

SUPPOSIT.—The substantial, subsistent individual. If a rational being, supposit is called "person."

SYLLOGISM.—1. Logical form of deductive reasoning. A discourse in which, certain things being given, something other than the given necessarily follows from the given.

2. Division. *Categorical, hypothetical* syllogism. See *Categorical, Hypothetical.*

T

TERM.—1. Verbal expression of a concept; corresponds to the first operation of the mind.

2. Physics. End point of a motion.

THEORETICAL.—That which is purely an object of speculation (i.e. contemplation). Opposed to *practical.* In phrase: theoretical (speculative) sciences.

TIME.—The measure of motion according to before and after. Differs from *eternity* and *eviternity* or the *aevum.* Eternity: perfect and simultaneous possession of life without beginning or end. Eviternity: the ceaseless, nonsuccessive duration of spiritual substances.

"TOPICS" [TOPICA].—One of the books of the *Organon* of Aristotle; treats in particular of "commonplaces," i.e. commonly acknowledged propositions which govern probable reasoning or argumentation.

TRANSCENDENTALS.—1. In Aristotelian use, that which is above (in the sense of not restricted to) any genus.

2. *Transcendental properties.* Those which pertain to being as being, hence are found in all its modes. Basically three: the one, the true, the good.

TRUTH.—1. In general, conformity between intellect and thing.

2. *Logical* truth. Conformity of the intellect to the thing it knows. Occurs, formally speaking, in the second operation of the mind only, i.e. in judgment.

3. *Ontological* (transcendental) truth. Property of every being, namely its conformity to the intellect that is its principle, the creative intellect.

U

"UBI" [lit. "where"].—Term designating the predicament *place.* See *Place.*

UNIVERSAL.—1. Term or concept taken in all its extension.

2. *Controversy about Universals.* Specifically, the discussion among medieval Scholastics concerning the validity of universal concepts.

UNIVOCAL.—Property of a term or concept which is said of its inferiors according to a meaning absolutely identical in each case; e.g. "man." Opposed to *analogous* and *equivocal, q.v.*

V

VEGETATIVE (LIFE).—Totality of lower vital functions common to all living things in nature; namely nutrition, growth, reproduction.

VERB.—Logic. Word in a proposition signifying action or passion with a necessary reference to time.

VIOLENT.—1. That which is counter to the natural inclinations of a being.

2. *Violent motion.* That which goes contrary to such natural inclinations.

W

WILL.—Rational appetite, or appetite which follows on intellectual knowledge. Its object is the good apprehended by the intellect. See also *Free Will.*

WISDOM.—Knowledge of things by their highest and most universal causes. Subjectively, one of the five intellectual virtues (habitus). In the natural order, pre-eminently metaphysics.

WORD (MENTAL).—The concept (or interior term of the intellectual act) in which the intellect contemplates its object. Synonym: "expressed species."

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